"OUR ASIATIC CHRIST"

Oscar MacMilan Buck

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BY

OSCAR MacMILLAN BUCK

Professor of Missions and Comparative Religion
Drew Theological Seminary

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EVANGELICAL
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To

LOIS MATHILD BUCK

In Grateful Memory

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOREWORD

TO ONE who loves India, as the land of his birth and boyhood and profession, the writing of such a book is joy tempered only with the regret that the work is not more perfect. The subject is worthy of the utmost craftsmanship.

It deals with India who, with the rich heritage of her past, faces confusedly the new day. Just what to grasp and what to let go is an ever-insistent problem. Of certain ancient values she is convinced; of certain of the newer values from the inrushing civilization of the West she seems reasonably assured. Wherein lies the harmonious adjustment of the two?

It deals with the Christ, "the only Oriental that the Occident has admired with an admiration that has become worship," and the "only name the West has carried into the East, which the East has received and praised and loved with sincerity and without qualification." [1]

In using the personal pronouns without the capital, for the sake of uniformity, and as in the New Testament itself, there is, of course, no

[1] A. M. Fairbairn.

intention or desire to lessen the reverence or homage due to the "character supreme" in human history and life.

I have used the words "Hindu" and "Indian," as many American readers need to be reminded, as religious and national terms respectively. All Indians are not Hindus by religious adherence, though the latter form some two-thirds of the population.

These chapters, it needs to be added, were delivered as the Lectures on the Merrick Foundation of the Ohio Wesleyan University in March of 1927.

OSCAR MACMILLAN BUCK

September 20, 1927
Sycamore Cottage,
DREW FOREST

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And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

MARK 1:10, 11

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"Our Asiatic Christ"

YEA, at the end of pregnant strife,
Enthroned as guru of the earth,
This land of Hind shall teach the worth
Of Christian faith and Christian life.

In sooth her name in letters bright,
Before all other names I trow,
Is writ, Lord Christ, upon Thy brow;
And her to serve is my delight.

When shall these longings be sufficed
That stir my spirit night and day?
When shall I see my country lay
Her homage at the feet of Christ?—

Yea, how behold that blissful day
When all her prophets' mystic lore
And all her ancient wisdom's store
Shall own His consummating sway? . . .

Of all I have, O Saviour sweet,—
All gifts, all skill, all thoughts of mine,—
A living garland I entwine,
And offer at Thy lotus feet.

From the CHRISTAYAN of Narayan Vaman Tilak
(Translated by J. C. Winslow)

INTRODUCTION

"OUR ASIATIC CHRIST"—the first time I heard it was in the home of an Indian painter of distinction. He had been showing me his paintings: Sri Krishna as charioteer expounding the Gita, India's favorite Scripture, and the great god Siva as ascetic, sitting amid the clouds of the highest Himalaya. I saw my chance. "Can you not paint us the face of Jesus as an Indian understands him?"

"It is what I have long been telling him," broke in his old father. "I have been urging him to paint our Asiatic Christ." He spoke with pride. "You talk about disassociating him from Europeanism; he has never been associated with Europeanism. Christ is the great idea of Hinduism. No Hindu can afford to ignore Christ; no Hindu can afford not to love Christ. We know Christ, our own Asiatic Christ, in his own natural color."

And the painter added, "Oh, we love the Christ of the Gospels. I shall attempt his face."

This sense of proprietorship is one of the most interesting phases of the shifting attitude toward Jesus that is now apparent among the non-

Christian intelligentsia in India.[1] Nor is it confined to India. Mother Asia is becoming self-conscious and beginning to gather together all her assets. She is discovering, strangely enough, that Jesus of Nazareth is one of her own sons. She had taken him, lo, these many centuries, to be European.

So they are calling him "the true son of the Orient." And they write of him: "With all your attempts to paint him with blue eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental."[2]

"When we speak of an Eastern Christ we speak of the incarnation of unbounded love and grace; and when we speak of the Western Christ we speak of the incarnation of theology, formalism, ethical and physical force."[3]

"The celestial figure of the sweet Prophet of Nazareth is illumined with strange and unknown radiance when the light of Oriental faith and mystic devotion is allowed to fall upon it. It is a fact that the greatest religions of the world have sprung from Asia. It has with some accuracy been said, therefore, that it is an Asiatic only who can teach religion to Asiatics."[4]

[1] See *The Christ of the Indian Road*, by E. Stanley Jones (New York: The Abingdon Press).

[2] Vivekananda.

[3] P. C. Mozoomdar, *The Oriental Christ*, p. 46.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

"We Hindus who can understand his teachings and appreciate them at their real worth would seem to be much better Christians than those who regard the Sermon on the Mount as a string of pretty, impracticable dreams."[1]

I was talking recently with some Hindu students of a large university in Eastern India. When I tried to show them that Jesus came where Asia, Europe and Africa meet, they replied, very frankly, "You know that it is not so. He was born in Asia and was an Asiatic. He belongs to us. We shall interpret him."

In Southern India a group of professional men —all Hindus—said to me, "We understand him better than you do. We shall interpret him."

"In what way?" I asked.

"Not differently, but more thoroughly," they answered.

Has our interpretation then been so shallow? Will their interpretation cause us to be offended in him? Shall we take him to the brow of our high hill of Western culture and cast him over? Or will that interpretation be a new voice calling us from our broken nets that take so little out of the sea of life, and from our hired men—from all the inherited and rented beliefs which sustain

[1] Aiyar, *Rambles in Vedanta*, p. 336.

our thinking and acting—and follow this Asiatic Christ in a fresh adventure?

I have been seeking that interpretation. As companion of Dr. E. Stanley Jones and of our Indian associate, John Wesley Richards Net Ram, I have passed up and down India and then back and forth, ever seeking. In many conferences and conversations I have put the question, "What think ye of Christ?" In my own studies of Hinduism, where there is undoubtedly a rich *preparatio evangelica,* I have looked for his footsteps. I have taken up afresh the four Gospels and read them slowly in the light of what men of India were saying to me.

"Our Asiatic Christ"—So they painted him for me, mixing the colors of the Gospel narratives with the colors of their own religious past, even as it was done in the early Christian centuries. (They have not yet reached Paul's marvelous palette and paints.) The whole, I hope, may be a challenge to us of the West, and to them of the East, to explore anew not merely the Christ of our childhood training and our Sunday church-going habits,—but the Christ of all the centuries and of all the continents.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHRIST RETURNS TO ASIA

"Where he was brought up"

THE city was Agra—Agra, world-famed (and rightly so) for her crown jewel, the Taj Mahal. By invitation we met informally the members of the Bar Association, at their bar library. Lawyers they were and non-Christians, keen-witted men of every type. We sat on the veranda, chairs drawn in an ellipse. The conversation was on the Christ. We stripped him of his Western robes and talked of the Christ of Galilee and Jerusalem, the Christ of Gethsemane and the Resurrection garden. Their eyes were soon alight.

Two things you can take for granted: First, that India loves to talk about religion. A queer people, are they not? And yet why queer? Is not the eternal God more important than the changing weather? Is not the *life* more important than the dress which clothes it? When Jesus says, "What shall a man give in exchange for his life," the Hindu comments, "Hallowed words which will live forever." Then, who is queer, the American Christian or the Indian Hindu?

Second, that Christ fits into the Indian mind as the sun fits into the sky. *"Anima naturaliter Christiana"*—it is as true of the Indian peninsula as of the Roman world. He dovetails into their sense of the fitness of things. The Indian mind is really cut to match his pattern.[1]

An hour passed with the lawyers and the theme was still Jesus. "We cannot possibly make any objection to such a Person or such teaching," said one of them, spokesman for the rest. "But it is not thus that India has learned Christ. He has been brought to us dressed in the clothes of Western imperialism. Put these off and live his high teachings and we will believe."

This statement is only partially true. India thinks it is true. And so she is cutting through to the Christ. "Pack up all your doctrines and let us first find Christ . . . India needs Christ, not so much Christianity." [2]

The story of the return of Christ to Asia is one of the great stories. Carried by the missionaries of the Western world, he has come back to the continent of his birth and ministry. There

[1] "When I reached the Sermon on the Mount, I could not tear myself away from those burning words of love and tenderness and truth. In these three chapters I found answers to the most abstruse problems of Hindu philosophy. It amazed me to see how here the most profound problems were completely solved." J. C. Winslow, *Narayan Vaman Tilak*, p. 21.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 118.

have been no garments and no Hosannahs. The gates of the cities of Asia have been shut in his face. He came not to bring peace to these lands, but a sword: to set families at variance, and they knew it. They closed their doors. They let him cry alone in the streets. His voice chilled their hearts and stopped their pulse beats. They have dreaded him as the plague. Yet, the Christ who spoke harshly of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, the home cities, could speak very gently of Sodom and Gomorrah and of Tyre and Sidon, and patiently, through his servants, he dealt with these Tyres and Sidons of China and Japan and India. The epic of his pity will some day be written. He found those among them that were hungry and gave them to eat; thirsty and gave them to drink, naked and clothed them, sick and visited and healed them, in prison and came unto them. He gathered their children and taught them, he lifted those beaten by social disabilities and robbed of their manhood and womanhood and brought them unto the inn. He brought good tidings to their poor that swarmed in streets and fields, proclaimed release to their captives, recovery of sight to their blind and set at liberty those among them that were bruised. He came down to the innumerable tiny villages and ham-

lets proclaiming the new and acceptable year of the Lord. Decade after decade passed—of varied ministry at the hands of men and women more or less humble—and now Asia begins to undo the bolts, to unlock the doors, to peep through, whispering to herself half fearful, half joyful—not knowing just what her new guest might do to the ancient furniture and yet attracted by his face and figure— "Our Asiatic Christ."

India is of especial significance in this story—for a twofold reason. First, because India has done the religious thinking for most of Asia. The fountains which burst from the hills of Indian philosophic thought and Indian religious emotion have watered the lands north, south and east. India is well called "the burning heart of Asia," and can still, if once the fires are relighted, flood the earth with light. And second, because India was the first great mission field of both Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity. In India the great organized Christianity of the West first tried itself out.[1]

To an ancient land of religious pride and re-

[1] Earlier than this, Nestorian Christianity had been widespread in Asia but not deep, and was overwhelmed by the Mohammedan conquests in Central and Western Asia, by Chinese nationalism in the East, and by the caste system in southern India, which formed a cyst about it, granting it social respectability at the price of surrender of its missionary purpose.

ligious traditions came the emissaries of the returning Christ. It was early said, "If Christianity wants to find out what it cannot do, let it try itself on India."

The Roman Catholics were in first, and were almost immediately brought to a standstill in face of the ancient Hinduism. They turned accordingly to the Portuguese and their half-breeds, whose numbers greatly increased; to the outcastes and low-castes, where by a strange mixture of love and statecraft they baptized their thousands; and to capturing the ancient "Syrian Christianity" (formerly Nestorian) of the Malabar coast.

Only once and in one region did they pierce the Brahmin opposition—by methods condemned by the Roman See itself. By a complete surrender to caste and by fraud the Jesuits pressed into the very citadel of Hinduism in Southern India. The papal legate, Cardinal de Touron, exposed their falsehoods, and briefs and bulls followed in quick succession. The final bull of Pope Benedict XIV in 1741 and the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1759 brought this unhappy experiment to an end. The Madura Mission collapsed and "the tens of thousands of converts with which the mission had been credited melted away, the great

majority lapsing back into that heathenism from which they had never really emerged." [1]

After almost three hundred years of Roman Catholic effort to break the solid front of Hinduism a well-known French Jesuit missionary could write, "It is my decided opinion that under existing circumstances there is no human possibility of converting the Hindoos to any sect of Christianity." [2]

The early Protestant mission fared little better. Its first missionaries, the young Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, had difficulty in landing at the little Danish trading settlement of Tranquebar on the Coromandel coast. They bore a letter from the King of Denmark, yet even royal favor had little influence with a hostile Governor. "They were ordered to remain in a house before the gate till the Governor had leisure to come in the afternoon. On his arrival, assuming the utmost roughness, he asked what brought them there. They were a mere nuisance. Had they any authority? What could he do? That was no place for missionaries. They were not wanted. What could the King know about such things? And so he turned upon his heel, and withdrew with his suite into the Fort.

[1] J. N. Ogilvie, *Apostles of India*, p. 195. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915.)

[2] Abbé Dubois quoted in *English Works of Ram Mohun Ray*, I, 254.

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"Petrified by this contempt for the King's mandate, as much as cast down by so unexpected a reception, the two young men slowly followed, expecting that some one would inform them of the arrangements made for their stay. But at the market-square the group suddenly separated, and in a moment Governor, Council and chaplain had disappeared, and the square was empty. The sun had set, and as the houses were already shrouded in gloom the strangers could not tell what turn to take, but watched and waited under the silent stars—the first Protestant missionaries that ever stood on Indian soil, wondering much what would happen next, and bethinking themselves that even the 'Son of Man had not where to lay his head.' " [1]

By fervent endeavors and beautiful lives these men of the Danish-Halle Mission built the first Protestant churches of South India. Among low-castes and out-castes they gathered their converts till the Christian community stood at some 20,000. High-caste Hinduism, however, was impenetrable, and the end was disintegration. The home churches were chilled in their faith and zeal, and reinforcements fell off. But more serious than this were the concessions made to caste, and caste was too much for these young churches. Hin-

[1] Dr. Fleming Stevenson: *Dawn of Modern Missions*, p. 62.

duism was showing clearly enough what Christianity could not do.

If Christ were to win India, a second foothold, a fresh zeal and a revised technique were needed. There could be no dalliance with caste in the Christian Church. It must be scotched or its subtle poison would again benumb the conscience and the enthusiasm of the "Churches of God" in India.

God chooses His own workmen. To a Northampton cobbler, by name William Carey, came the summons. As he cobbled he studied his Hebrew and his Greek. As he cobbled he read his *Cook's Voyages* and made his notations on the map of the world pasted on his wall. On Sundays he preached. From this kindling laid in his soul he took fire. "The missionary spirit was at last born in the heart of one Englishman."

From that fire he lighted other lives with his passion. "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." Under those memorable words one English Church moved out to its world-mission. Carey had but repeated the ever insistent word of Jesus, "According to your faith be it done unto you."

The fresh foothold was at Serampore on the Hooghly River, fifteen miles north of Calcutta, the capital of Bengal. Bengal was a noted

stronghold of Hinduism. Here Carey and his companions elaborately laid out their lines—preaching, education, literature, Bible translation, journalism, medicine, social reform and no compromise with caste.

Converts were not made easily or quickly. The first man was won by Carey's medical associate, Doctor Thomas. In the joy of winning a Hindu caste-man, a carpenter, to Christ, the good doctor went insane. It is also recorded that "the governor shed tears" at the sight.

Two more years passed (1802) and there came "the first Brahmin who had bowed his neck to the gospel in all India up to this time. Krishna Prosad, then nineteen, 'gave up his friends and his caste with much fortitude, and is the first Brahmin who has been baptised. The word of Christ's death seems to have gone to his heart, and he continues to receive the Word with meekness.' The *poita* or sevenfold thread which, as worn over the naked body, betokened his caste, he trampled under foot, and another was given to him, that when preaching Christ he might be a witness to the Brahmins at once that Christ is irresistible and that an idol is nothing in the world. This he voluntarily ceased to wear in a few years." [1]

[1] George Smith, *Life of William Carey*, p. 102.

Two more Brahmins were baptized in 1804. The wedge was entering.

Yet it was during this very decade that the eager Henry Martyn was writing home:

"What surprises me is the change of views I have here from what I had in England. There, my heart expanded with joy and hope, at the prospect of the speedy conversion of the heathen! But here, the sight of the apparent impossibility requires a strong faith to support the spirits.

"How shall it ever be possible to convince a Hindu or Brahmin of anything? Truly if ever I see a Hindu a real believer in Jesus, I shall see something more nearly approaching the resurrection of a dead body than anything I have yet seen."

The lives of European traders and soldiers and officials were complicating the efforts of the missionaries:

"When chaplains were sent out (to Calcutta), the Governor-General officially wrote of them to the Court of Directors so late as 1795:—'Our clergy in Bengal with some exceptions, are not respectable characters.' From the general relaxation of morals, he added, 'a black coat is no security.' They were so badly paid . . . that they traded. Preaching was the least of the chaplains' duties; burying was the most onerous. An-

glo-Indian society, cut off from London, itself not much better, by a six months' voyage, was corrupt. Warren Hastings and Philip Francis, his hostile colleague in Council, lived in open adultery. The majority of the officials had native women, and the increase of their children, who lived in a state worse than that of the heathen, became . . . alarming. The fathers not infrequently adopted the Hindoo pantheon along with the zenana." [1]

Said a Hindu dancing-girl to a missionary of these early days who was laying down the conditions of entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven: "Alas, sir, in that case hardly any European will ever enter it."

In 1820 came the first break. Raja Ram Mohun Ray has been called "the pioneer of all living advance, religious, social, and educational, in the Hindu community during the nineteenth century." He stood between his own Bengali people and the English as interpreter and friend. A Brahmin by birth, coming early under Mohammedan influence, a revenue officer in Government service, and a friend of the Serampore missionaries—he was fitted as no other for the role of mediator. He had no particular interest in Christianity. Of Christian missionaries he

[1] Smith, *Life of William Carey*, p. 56.

wrote, "To the best of my belief no denomination of Christians has had any real success in bringing natives of India over to the Christian faith." Of Christian converts he wrote, "For my own part I have no personal knowledge of any native converts respectable for their understanding, morals, and condition in life." Yet he had an interest in Jesus, and issued in that year, 1820, a little book of sixty-eight pages, containing the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Four Gospels, and entitled, "The Precepts of Jesus—The Guide to Peace and Happiness." It was published at the Serampore Baptist Mission Press.

In the Introduction Ram Mohun Ray writes these very significant words:

"This simple code of religion and morality is so admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of one God who has equally subjected all living creatures without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain, and death and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over nature, and is also so well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race in the discharge of their various duties to God, to themselves, and to society, that

I cannot but hope the best effects from its promulgation in its present form."

He follows this up with the further statement: "I presume to think that Christianity, if properly inculcated, has a greater tendency to improve the moral, social, and political state of mankind than any other known religious system." [1]

This first note of appreciation of Jesus was not welcomed with deep joy. It rather fell afoul of the missionaries and much bitter argument ensued. The question at issue was whether the simple precepts of Jesus as given in the Gospels are a *sufficient* guide to peace and happiness or not. Ram Mohun Ray claimed that they were sufficient; the missionaries claimed that more was needed, especially the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement as set forth in the Epistles and in Christian theology. They refused to print his books and Ram Mohun Ray had to buy his own types. He spent most valuable years of his life trying to prove to Christian missionaries the sufficiency of the Jesus of the Gospels for human life. Of this Jesus he writes, "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, a term synonymous with that of Messiah, the highest of all prophets; his life declares him to have been as represented in the Scriptures, pure as

[1] *English Works of Ram Mohun Ray*, I, 25.

light, innocent as a lamb, necessary for eternal life as bread for a temporal one, and great as the angels of God or rather greater than they. . . . The Redeemer, Mediator, and Intercessor with God in behalf of his followers." [1]

The missionaries, afraid of compromise, were contending for a deeper surrender of the Hindu mind.

Ram Mohun Ray turned from them to establish in Calcutta a Universal Theistic Church, the "Church of God" (Brahma Samaj), in which the essential truth of all religions might find expression.

In 1830, a young Scotch missionary, age twenty-four, arrived in Calcutta and began to turn things upside down. His name was Alexander Duff. "The aim he set before him was to capture the intellect of India, which meant then, what though in a somewhat modified degree it means still, the Brahman community. . . . That community was the mainstay of Hinduism and as yet it had scarce been touched by missionary effort. Where others had failed he hoped to succeed, by adopting the entirely novel method of educating this community in the knowledge of the West. Such education, he thought, would inevitably destroy their belief in Hinduism, which in its theology and its

[1] *English Works*, II, 162, 163.

tales outraged truth and morality at every turn, and accompanied and penetrated as his instruction would be with Christian teaching, the natural issue would be the acceptance of the religion of Christ. Only let the light shine and the darkness would fly away. . . . So against all precedent, and also against the advice of all the missionaries—with the important exception of the aged Carey who heartily approved—this intrepid and far-seeing young Scot, when only twenty-four years of age, announced that he would open in Calcutta an institution for the higher education of the Hindu community, the lessons to be given in English, and to be accompanied by instruction in the Christian religion."

"The Brahman youths murmured when on the opening day Duff put a copy of the Gospels into their hands, and asked them to read. 'This is the Christian Shaster,' they protested, 'we are not Christians; how can we read it? It may make us Christians, and our friends will drive us out of the caste!' Calmly Ram Mohun Ray who was present, allayed the storm. 'Christians,' he said, 'like Dr. Horace Wilson have studied the Hindu Shasters, and you know he has not become a Hindu. I myself have read all the Koran again and again, and has that made me a Mussulman?

Nay, I have studied the whole Bible, and you know I am not a Christian. Why then do you fear to read it? Read and judge for yourselves.'" [1]

The result was far reaching. Brahmin after Brahmin put on Christ, and the Christian Church in Bengal was provided with an adequate leadership. Nor is that all:

"'The largest fact in recent Indian history,' says J. N. Farquhar very truly, 'is the intellectual and moral upheaval which has produced the modern educated Hindu.' And, we may add, the man who brought that fact into being was Alexander Duff. There is scarcely a development which touches the higher spiritual and intellectual side of Modern India which does not owe intensely to him. To Duff is due the wider scope of Christian Missions of today, which count truth in every sphere an ally to be welcomed. To him is due the deeper aim of Missions of today, when they seek to win the mind as well as the heart of India for Christ. To him every Government school and college, aye and every Hindu institution as well, where the English tongue is the means of imparting Western knowledge, is largely indebted for very existence: for in him was found the bold pioneer whose daring

[1] Ogilvie, *Apostles of India*, pp. 386 and 389.

experiment first showed the way to progress, and then by its success compelled all others to follow." [1]

The Renaissance was on in India, and Christ was deeply involved in the whole development. Through three channels he has become more than a name in the lives of the higher castes that make up the bulk of the new intelligentsia of India. Along three paths he makes his entry into Indian hearts.

First, through English literature taught in all the institutions of higher learning throughout India. The name of Christ may not be always present but our English literature is saturated with his ideas and ideals and spirit. For a hundred years—since 1835—these have played as a fountain upon the minds of susceptible youth. Slowly their thinking has been remolded and their ancient culture remodeled. "We Hindus hate to admit it, but Christ is remaking all our ideas," said the ex-Registrar of one of the great Government universities. And an English educationalist, formerly Director of Public Instruction in the Central Provinces, bears witness to the fact that "apart from the relative success in training a large number of students for certain professional careers, western education has, at a deeper

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 424–425.

level, made three distinctive contributions to Indian life. In English sports and games, in Shakespeare and in the life of Christ, Indians have found in each case something that makes its appeal to their whole personality. 'India owes the Bible to the schools and colleges that have grown out of British rule in India. The Bible is perhaps the only asset of western culture that has never been referred to with a gesture of reproach or hate.' "[1] No wonder nationalist speakers and Indian journalists are constantly quoting from the Bible.

The second path along which Christ is making his approach and his appeal is, of course, the Christian missionary enterprise. Apart from its work with its own Christian community, now some five millions in number, and apart from its work with the low-caste and the outcaste, for the poor still have the good news preached to them, this great enterprise reaches out to the high-caste and well-born through all its activities. In its schools and colleges, thronged with non-Christian boys, it teaches not only the English classics but very definitely the New Testament as well. It is no exaggeration to say that the new interest in "Our Asiatic Christ" is coming directly out of

[1] From the review of Arthur Mayhew's *The Education of India* in *International Review of Missions*, 1926, p. 693.

the Christian mission schools where non-Christian boys are admitted.

Many of these high-caste boys have become Christians outright by process of baptism. The price they have paid, and still pay, is terrific. Out of great tribulation they come—social ostracism and loss of all that the Hindu family holds dear. Hinduism still resents bitterly any loss from its ranks.

Of the beginnings in Madras we read:

"This youth with another from the highest class, both lads of superior intelligence, renounced Hinduism in favor of Christianity, and on Sabbath evening, June 20th, 1841, received the ordinance of Baptism. Cast out by their friends because of the step they had taken, they were received into the home of the missionaries. This event made no small stir among the caste people of the city and reduced the number of students in attendance from four hundred to seventy. . . . A few weeks later there was another baptism from among the students, but the event passed without tumult and without legal proceedings, though the feeling roused by the two first baptisms had in no degree abated, and the institution continued to be shunned like a hospital filled with plague-stricken patients."

"The school had in a measure recovered from

the panic and consequent desertions occasioned by the first baptisms among the students, when a Brahmin youth, nineteen years of age proclaimed himself a Christian and received the rite of baptism. Before taking this decisive step he was visited by his father who tried by persuasion and threats to dissuade him from his purpose, but the youth remained firm. On the morning of his baptism his mother, accompanied by other female relatives arrived, but the young man declined to see them. 'I have told my father all,' he said. 'My feelings are unchanged.' He was baptised in the Hall of the institution in the presence of his fellow-students. On the following day more than three hundred students absented themselves from the classes; and when the news reached the branch schools the numbers there were also greatly diminished. After several months the younger pupils began to return, but the older pupils were not again permitted to place themselves under the instruction of the missionaries." [1]

Of the beginnings in Bombay we read, "In 1839 three Parsi students of the college who had received religious instruction from Dr. Wilson, renounced their ancestral faith and accepted Christianity. These young men belonged to the most influential families in the Parsi community,

[1] Helen H. Holcomb, *Men of Might in India Missions*, p. 251 f. (Revell. 1901.)

and were among the most intelligent students in the college. Their conversion to Christianity created a great panic among the Parsi inhabitants, and for a time the lives of the converts were in danger. The numbers in attendance at the college greatly diminished and for a long time after this event the Parsis continued to hold aloof." [1]

I hold in my hand the letter of a Bengali Brahmin boy who later served for many years as professor in one of the large Theological Seminaries in North India. The letter written fifty-two years ago reads:

"So I came out of my house to be baptized, leaving behind me all my relations and friends, who, I knew, would be turned to my enemies as the Bible says. The pain of separation from them is of course very great, but it is nothing in comparison with the pain of my heart from which I had to suffer before. I am now glad to let you know that I have got full consolation in my heart through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Enclosed is a letter from his guardian:

"I so strongly asked you not to forsake our religion and you without knowing what it is gave it up in order to annoy me. . . . What foolish arguments you make in your letter now—when you have already committed such a horrible deed,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

being the son of a Brahmin. . . . I solemnly affirm that if I hear you have come to L—— I will immediately leave this place and go somewhere else and would never see your face any more. If you have still the least regard for me I with joined hands beseech you not to make up your mind to come here—I shall not be able to see the people laugh at me when they see you here. Mind you will be the cause of my death and ruin if you come here to put me to extreme trouble and agony. . . . I again solicit your favor not to write me again nor to anyone of this place—so that I may think you are dead which was thousand times better than your such action. Why did you not read Sanscrit first and then become so. Since you communicated this painful news I again feel giddiness and much heat in my brain. Seeing me pensive and uneasy my wife and daughters all curse you and say that you will be the cause of my decease this time. I am not inclined to argue with you now—I am trying hard to remove you from my remembrance and to think that you are dead. The Bengaly Baboos all curse you abominably which I shame to hear. I have begged them not to take your name before me as a favor, for I become heated and feel giddy. In fact you have made me most uneasy. I really pray for an early end of my life. It is very disgraceful

to me to hear people curse you and laugh at me. . . . I won't see you any more—and I will take you as my mortal enemy—I can't excuse you anyhow. I shall deem it a favor if you stop writing to me or anyone here—You are no more my protege ——"

A noble group they were—these high-caste disciples of the Christ, pioneers in what was then a desperate venture. Their influence on Hinduism was largely lost because they were cut off so completely from their old associations. There were then no half-way houses; they had to come the whole way into the Christian Church. The latter was the gainer no doubt—but how much greater would have been their influence if they could have served the Christ amid their own families and friends!

The third path along which the Christ is walking into Indian life and transforming it lies amid the new and vigorous sects which are springing up in the old religious systems. It was natural and to be expected that Indian religions should react to all the new ideas and institutions and methods that during the nineteenth century poured in from the West. The Indian soil has been refertilized and is bearing new harvests. The ancient tree has begun to put forth new branches.

The oldest of these—the Brahma Samaj—began (1828) with Ram Mohun Ray and the controversy growing out of the "Precepts of Jesus." Christian ethics and social ideals have had large place in this important society. Again and again it has paid high honor to Jesus, approaching, in one of its three branches, very closely to the Christian position. It is no surprise then to read from the pens of Brahma Samajists such words as these: "David commits unpardonable crimes during the respites of his intermittent inspiration. Judhistir (Yudhishthira) publishes a half-uttered falsehood. Moses murders an Egyptian taskmaster. Mohammed proclaims a bloody war. And Sakya Muni (Gautama the Buddha) omits to lay down the doctrine of God. Who but the Eternal himself can reveal his character in relation to man? That character descends in Christ for the enlightenment, regeneration, and adoption of all men. Therefore Christ is the Son of God and the Son of Man alike. He is the Way, the Word made flesh, the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[1]

It is no wonder to hear from the lips of Brahma Samajists such words as these: "Here you have the complete triangular figure of the Trinity, three profound truths,—the Father, the

[1] P. C. Mozoomdar, *The Oriental Christ*, p. 89.

Son, and the Holy Ghost,—making up the harmonious whole of the economy of creation. Gentlemen, look at this clear triangular figure with the eye of faith, and study its deep mathematics. The apex is the very God Jehovah, the supreme Brahma of the Vedas. Alone, in his own eternal glory, he dwells. From him comes down the Son in a direct line, an emanation from Divinity. Thus, God descends and touches one end of the base of humanity, then, running all along the base, permeates the world, and then by the power of the Holy Ghost drags up regenerated humanity to himself. Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son: Divinity carrying up humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost. This is the whole philosophy of salvation. Such is the short story of human redemption. How beautiful! How soul-satisfying! The Father continually manifests His wisdom and mercy in creation, till they take the form of pure sonship in Christ; and then out of one little seed-Christ is evolved a whole harvest of endless and ever-multiplying Christs. God coming down and going up,—this is creation, this is salvation. In this plain figure of three lines, you have the solution of a vast problem. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost; the Creator, the Exampler, and the Sanctifier; I am,

I love, I save; the Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God; Force, Wisdom, Holiness; the True, the Good, the Beautiful; Sat, Chit, Ananda, 'Truth, Intelligence, and Joy.'" [1]

It is Keshub who speaks again, and where in the library of Christian devotion are there warmer words: "My Christ, my sweet Christ, the brightest jewel of my heart, the necklace of my soul—for twenty years have I cherished him in this my miserable heart. Though often defiled and persecuted by the world, I have found sweetness and joy unutterable in my master Jesus. . . . The mighty artillery of his love he levelled against me, and I was vanquished, and I fell at his feet.

"All over my body, all through my inner being I see Christ. He is no longer to me a doctrine or a dogma, but with Paul I cry, For me to live is Christ. . . . Christ is my food and drink, and Christ is the water that cleanses me." [2]

In the Brahma Samaj are many with deep reverence for Jesus. Said a Brahma Samajist to me, pointing to a copy of Holman Hunt's painting, "The Light of the World": "There is the Prince of prophets—with the most comforting message

[1] Keshub Chandra Sen quoted by Mozoomdar, p. 31.

[2] Keshub Chandra Sen, *Lectures in India*, pp. 260 and 393. Quoted by J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 66.

of them all. Our trouble is that we do not see our difficulties in the light of the entering Christ."

Said another Brahma Samajist, principal of one of the Government colleges in the capital city of one of the important provinces: "Christ came in the East. The East gave him to the West, and now the West gives him to the East. India will gladly be conquered by the returning Christ."

When I spoke in one of the larger temples of the Brahma Samaj in North India on "Jesus Christ as the Rallying-center of our New Humanity," the gracious Brahma chairman thanked me for preaching "good Brahma doctrine."

A different—and yet a similar story—is that of the Arya Samaj, a vigorous and militant reform-group of considerable influence in modern Hinduism. "Back to the Vedas!" is their watchword—back to the original purity and vitality of India's religious life. From the beginning the sect has stoutly opposed the Christian missionary propaganda. Its founder, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, a Hindu ascetic from Western India, who has been well called both the "Elijah" and the "Luther" of Hinduism—for his uncompromising opposition to idolatry and for his attempts to rid Hinduism of its rank undergrowth —was bitter in his denunciations of Christ. In

1874, the year before the founding of the Arya Samaj, he wrote in his "Light of Truth" (the Satyarthprakash) caustically:

"Jesus founded his religion in order to entrap others. Mark, Reader! How Christ in order to convince the savages pretended to be the Judge who will sit on the seat of justice on the day of judgment. This was meant simply to tempt simple, guileless men. . . . All that the Christians say about the miracles of Christ is based on wrong-headedness and injustice. It is mere childish prattle. . . . Many a Vairagee and other mendicants defraud guileless, ignorant men of their money by such tricks (as these). . . . Christ came to set men against each other, and cause them to fight, and he succeeded. Yes it becomes Christ alone to turn the members of one's own household into his foes; no good man will ever do such a thing. . . . Had Christ possessed even a little knowledge, why would he have talked such nonsense like a savage. However, as it has been said, 'In a country where no trees are seen to grow even the castor-oil plant is considered to be the biggest and the best tree,' in like manner in a country where none but the most ignorant savages lived, Christ was rightly considered a great man, but Christ can be no count among the learned and wise men of the present

day. . . . It is also clear that had not Christ himself been destitute of knowledge and understanding like children, he would not have taught others to become as children, since a man always wants to make others like himself. . . . Now behold! The cat is out of the bag. The real motive of Jesus in saying this to his followers was that they should not get out of his net even after he was dead. . . . Well done, Jesus! With the aid of which science did you know about the falling of the stars from heaven? Had Christ read a little (of science) he would certainly have known that all these stars are spheres like our earth, and therefore could not fall. All this shows that he was the son of a carpenter, must have for years worked as a carpenter, sawing, peeling, or cutting wood, or joining together different pieces of wood. When it entered his head that he could also pass for a prophet in that savage country he began to preach. He uttered a few good thoughts but many bad ones. The natives of that country were mostly savages and consequently believed in him. Had Europe been as enlightened and civilised then as it is at the present day, he could not have at all passed for a prophet. . . . It is certain, therefore, that he was only an ordinary man, simple and honest, but ignorant. . . . The Christians nowadays make

no end of fuss over the powers of Christ. He ought to have preferred suicide with a weapon or by stopping his respiration with the help of yoga or in some other manner, to death with such ignominy. But how could he have this sense when he was so destitute of knowledge." [1]

So Dayananda sat in judgment on the Christ and many of his strictures have passed from Arya to Arya, and simple village folk under Christian influences have been puzzled at such condemnation.

And yet in November of 1925 we sit as guests in the rooms of the principal Arya Samajist in India, and he tells us of his recently completing the rereading of the four Gospels. We ask him, "What is your opinion of Christ?" expecting the diatribes of Dayananda. Instead he answers softly with gentle countenance, "The only thing in the four Gospels to which I took exception was the killing of the fatted calf in the parable of the prodigal son. I myself understand it, but the majority of Hindus would not. It would prove an occasion of stumbling to them." Then he goes on to defend Jesus' insistence on internal purity as against the washing of hands and ceremonial purity. "Jesus was quite right in his attitude"

[1] From the translation of Dr. Chiranjiva Sharadwaja. Second Edition, revised by Professor Rama Deva of the Gurukula, Hardwar.

—he was talking to us as though we were Aryas and he Christian—"I cannot accept the Incarnation, and so I cannot agree with your interpretation of his words, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.' What he really meant was this: 'I show you the way, a higher way; I show you the truth, a higher truth; I show you the life, a higher life.' "

When he had defined the central teaching of Hinduism and Arya Samajism as the realization of the individual self and of the larger Self—God, he came back to Jesus: "The central teaching of Jesus and the central teaching of Hinduism are not far apart. It is a matter of method."

There is in this matter of Jesus many furlongs' distance between Swami Dayananda and Lala Hans Raj; between the ignorant man who set about to trap guileless disciples and the "I show you a better way, a better truth, and a better life," which way, truth, and life are fundamentally the way, truth, and life lying at the heart of Hinduism.

Said another Arya Samajist after long but kindly argument, "I shall confess to you that I draw one third of my religious nourishment from the New Testament."

Said still another, "If you will promise to ask the people of America to pray for India in the

name of Christ, then I shall pass from your critic to your disciple."

Another active group of significance in modern Hinduism is the Ramakrishna Mission established by Swami Vivekananda and his disciples (1897) on his return to India from the Parliament of Religions held in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893. This is Modern Vedanta—the ancient thorough-going pantheism of India combined with a very up-to-date social service. Vivekananda, whose proper name was Narendra Nath Datta, was a Bengali who came under Christian influences—taking his degree from a Mission College in Calcutta—and then under the influence of the Brahma Samaj. He himself tells the story of the change that came over his life when he first met the famous Hindu ascetic, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, whose disciple he thenceforth became:

"Do you believe in God, sir?"

"Yes."

"Can you prove it, sir?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense."

"That impressed me at once. For the first time I had found a man who dared to say that

he saw God, that religion was a reality to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world. I began to come near that man day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance can make a whole life change." [1]

And yet of this strange ascetic, Ramakrishna, to whom all religions were true, because all religions come from God and go unto God, and therefore one should stay in his own religion, it is recorded, in a paper of the Ramakrishna Mission, published in India:

"After a thorough mastery of all the Sadhanas, as described in different Scriptures, Lord Sri Ramakrishna tried to realise God through Christianity. Babu Sambhu Charan Mallik of Calcutta used to read the Bible to Sri Ramakrishna who had light about Christ and his religion. One day in the parlour of Babu Jadunath Mallik's gardenhouse, Sri Ramakrishna happened to see the picture of the Madonna with the Divine Child and pondering over the wonderful life of Christ changed altogether his Hindu outlook of mind. Returning to the Dakshineswar Temple he buried himself in those thoughts and forgot all about visiting the Divine Mother in the Temple. For three days he concentrated his mind on

[1] Vivekananda, *My Master*, p. 400.

Christ. On the fourth day as he was walking in the Panchivati, he saw 'a divinely looking person, fair and handsome, approaching the place where he stood with his serene look fixed on him. He knew him at once to be a man of foreign extraction. He had beautiful large eyes and though the nose was a little flat, it in no way marred the comeliness of his face.' Gradually the figure became near and Sri Ramakrishna instinctively felt 'This is the Christ who poured out his heart's blood for the redemption of mankind and suffered a sea of agony for their sake. It is none else but that Master-Yogin in eternal union with Godhead—Jesus the embodiment of Love!' Now Jesus embraced Sri Ramakrishna and merged in his person." [1]

Of the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission itself, this same paper goes on to tell, in an article by Swami Jnaneswarananda:

"The Ramakrishna order has a special relation with Christmas which we briefly narrate below:—

"The master Sree Ram Krishna had passed away and the small group of young disciples, who received the instruction of renunciation and service at the master's feet returned to their respective homes and resumed their studies. Only one or

[1] *The Morning Star*, Patna, December 27, 1925, p. 89. Edited by Swami Avyaktananda.

two remained in a dilapidated haunted house at Baranagar on the Ganges with the Master's relics. Naren (Narendra Nath Datta, or Vivekananda), the leader of the group, often remained at home to settle household affairs and some times remained at Baranagar. The mother of Baburam—one of the brother disciples, who herself was an ardent devotee of the Master, once requested the Master to consecrate her village home at Antpur by his holy visit, to which the Master agreed but soon afterwards he fell ill and his mortal body could never visit the proposed place. The devout lady was highly grieved for her long cherished hope not being fulfilled. She however made up her mind to satisfy to some extent her unfulfilled desire by inviting to her home the young disciples of the Master with their leader Naren whom the Master called inseparable from himself.

"Accordingly the trip was arranged and the party reached Antpur by the end of December under the leadership of their beloved Naren. The happiness of the hostess knew no bounds and she was busy in feeding and looking after the comforts of the party of young devotees of the Master. Days began to pass in unspeakable joys and merrymaking. Naren, the eternal fountain of joy, sometimes entertained the party with his

divine songs, sometimes by his charming eloquence and often by his jovial humour, and hours and days passed without ken. One evening it was arranged that the party would kindle a Dhuni and hold their sitting around it after the fashion of the Naga Sannyasins. Wood for the fire was at once procured, the Dhuni was kindled and the holy party sat around it and the leader began to speak inspiringly of renunciation. Gradually the conversation turned towards the Prophet of Nazareth, his divine love, pure simplicity, wonderful renunciation and the unparalleled sufferings and persecutions which he passed through for the struggling humanity; how after his crucifixion his followers preached the truths of Christianity through horrible oppression, how their love for their Master and the truth inspired them to carry the message to the high and the low and how they embraced the most ruthless persecutions and even cruel death with a smiling face blessing their oppressors with their last breath.

"Every word that the inspired Naren spoke entered directly into the hearts of his spell-bound audience, every mind was inspired with the zeal of renunciation and service. Has not their Master entrusted them with a similar message to save humanity from the deep mire of gold and lust? Are they not to lay their name, fame, ease

and comfort into the fire of renunciation and realise the truth themselves and help others to realise the same? Good-bye worldly happiness! Farewell gold and lust! Let renunciation, love and truth alone shine in their resplendent lustre. Nature all around was dark and sombre, the holy fire of the Dhuni was dimly burning adding its crimson glow to the divinely inspired faces of the young devotees. The grave inspired voice of the leader urged everybody to burn all their earthly desires into the fire. Every heart made a ready sacrifice of his all into the fire and Heaven received the offerings. In truth, the ceremony of sannyasa was performed in spirit and they felt God and God alone in their hearts. The whole group then enjoyed deep meditation for a long time and the vow of sannyasa took deep root in every heart.

"Thus was formed the monastic order of Sree Ram Krishna which subsequently developed into the present form. To the utter astonishment of the whole party they learnt afterwards that the memorable evening on which the example of the Prophet of Nazareth and his apostles inspired them to renunciation and service was the Christmas eve though they knew nothing about it at that time. Since then the day is held in high esteem by the brotherhood. . . . The party that

was once despised and ridiculed by its neighbours has already done wonderful service to humanity within this short time. Who knows what lies in the womb of the future!" [1]

Many are the tributes that these Vedantists in India, while opposing the organized Christianity coming out of the West, pay to Jesus and his disciples.

Vivekananda speaks of "the gigantic brain of Jesus of Nazareth" and again, "In Christ is embodied all that is the best and greatest in his own race; the incarnation, the life for which that race has struggled for ages; and he himself is the impetus for the future, not only to his own race, but to unnumbered other races of the world." [2]

Says another Swami (Nikhilananda): "Everything about him was so open, simple, and straightforward. . . . The religion of Jesus was sweet and simple like the gentle dew drops of the early spring morning." [3]

And another (Avyaktananda): "Truly Lord Jesus and his disciples constituted that unperceived seed which ultimately blossomed forth as the gigantic tree, supplying mankind with the shade of peace, love, and benediction." [4]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94.
[2] *Works*, IV, 139.
[3] *Morning Star*, December 27, 1925, p. 92.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

One of their lay-missionaries in South India said to me, "In my home is my private shrine for worship. In it are three pictures before which I place daily my offering of flowers and before which I pray. The central picture of the three is the picture of Jesus Christ. And not only is it so in my own home but it is so in the Ramakrishna Hall of this city."

The Theosophical Society has been unusually active in India since 1878 and has a considerable following among the educated Hindu group. The Theosophists led by Madame Blavatsky and later by Mrs. Besant, have taken up the full defense of Hinduism, adding to it their own occult practices. They now proclaim the return of Christ in a new vehicle—viz., the body of a young Hindu of Brahmin birth by name J. Krishnamurti. Of this return it is written in one of their pamphlets:

"We hold that the World Teacher who came last as the Christ is an official of the great Hierarchy, which under the direction of the Logos of the system guides and manages the evolution of the world. . . . The present Holder of the Office has only come twice as yet—as Sri Krishna in India and as Jesus Christ in Palestine. When He sees fit, when He thinks it desirable, He will come again. . . . We expect the Second Coming of the Christ comparatively soon. That is to say,

most people now living will surely see it. . . . And so it cannot be expected that the great body of orthodox Christians will welcome Him. So let us all be John the Baptists: let us all be ready to prepare His way and draw others to His Feet." [1]

Lip service, you say—yet an Indian Christian points out, "Most of the Theosophists fully believe that Christ is an avatar of God, and at the Adyar, their headquarters, they have the figure of Christ cut in stone with a lamp on one side, and one of Krishna with his flute [on the other]. They have done yeoman service to Christianity by removing the prejudices in Hindu minds against Christ and by adopting Christian ways of thinking, expression, and worship." [2]

And what of the older sects and phases of Hinduism, and the other Indian religions? Are the footsteps of the Christ to be traced within their precincts? On all sides one discovers that Jesus of Nazareth has been passing by.

The Jains in Lahore were having their annual celebration. Over the entrance to the big tent was stretched a banner with the "Golden Rule" of Jesus in gold lettering, and the principal ad-

[1] Pamphlet, *The Coming Christ, Why We Expect Him*, published Colombo, Ceylon, by "The Order of the Star in the East."

[2] A. S. Appasamy, *Fifty Years Pilgrimage of a Convert*, p. 7.

dress had many references to the Bible: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," "the Kingdom of God," "God made man in His own image," etc. (All in a religion that is avowedly atheistic in its philosophic position.)

I sat with the two principal leaders of the Sikh community in Lahore. One was their principal religious writer, who was just out of jail, having been incarcerated for his political activity. The other was head of the young Sikh movement and their principal editor. The former was speaking of Sikhism, and when he ceased I asked him if he did not include Jesus Christ among those favored ones, who were blessed with the intuitive realization of God?

"Certainly," he replied. "He knew God and taught men to know Him. He is to be honored."

"Then what fault do you find in Him?" I asked.

"Only this," he answered, "He surrendered to the material world about us."

"How?" I asked, amazed at his putting of it.

"He used His great power too much for material ends. He fed the hungry to satisfy their hunger, and healed the sick to make their bodies whole. Thus satisfied and healed, they went no further, and spiritual power had been used without spiritual effect."

"What charge then do you bring against this man?"

"Only this. He comes too much eating and drinking, and takes too seriously this world's hunger and disease."

I sat opposite a Sakta Brahmin of Bengal, professor in one of the great universities of that Province. In answer to my inquiry he spoke, "All who read the Gospels know that Christ is a saintly man. I do not speak of him as a man. I love him. He speaks straight to the heart. The missionaries have made a great mistake in presenting him. They have not realised that the India of today is more like the Graeco-Roman world of the first three centuries than like modern Europe and America. In fact India of the eighteenth century and the Graeco-Roman world of the third are similar. India has not changed greatly since the eighteenth century. . . . Present Christ to India as he was presented to Alexandria. The greatest event in all human history is the conquest of the Graeco-Roman world by this little book.[1] Give us the Christ of those centuries. Industrial America and political Europe are hiding him from our eyes."

Hindu Orthodoxy has its Society for the Protection of Orthodoxy: the Sanatana Dharma.

[1] The New Testament.

Even the Sanatanists are beginning to bear witness that the Christ must be reckoned with. The manner of that reckoning is characteristically Hindu:

"Gentlemen," said one of them in our presence to fellow Sanatanists, "you may not agree with me. I am convinced that Christ was a divine character. He was the model character. He excelled in the service of others. Among the 'incarnates,' the avatars of the Supreme, he was the purest and the mightiest. You cannot deny his uniqueness; for in so doing you deny the uniqueness of other incarnations, the uniqueness of Rama and Krishna. Denial cuts both ways. Christ is unique."

Vigorous hand clapping showed that his audience agreed with him.

Said another along the same line but farther advanced perhaps:

"We realise that our Hindu incarnations are each but temporary and a phase of truth. We are ready to admit that Christ may express a larger measure of truth—the fulness of truth—truth itself. Many of us are inclined to that view."

A third Sanatanist writes—and here is the rub for Christianity in India—"We believe Christ to be one of the greatest teachers of the world, but

not the only teacher. God in His infinite power and mercy sends down such Teachers in all ages and in all great nations who are prepared to receive them. The teachings of Christ and Krishna in the Gita are very much alike. If this view of the Hindus is accepted by our Christian friends, we will embrace them and their religion in all sincerity. This is the only hindrance."

What shall we say? It is a time of strain and bewilderment in India. Winds are blowing from many points of the compass and waves are running high. Over the stormy waters of change the Christ is walking. Many are fearful of him. Many welcome him. He is walking into the situation.

A recent writer, a missionary of many years' experience and many contacts with educated Hindus, notes the change that has come over the face of this the leading group in Indian society:

"Religious thought among the educated today is dominated by the personality of Christ. One is met constantly by serious expressions of modern Indian thought in which pre-eminence, explicit or implicit, is accorded to Him in the religious sphere. Among educated Hindus hostility to Jesus Christ is a thing all but unknown. . . . To the Christian teacher it is a new experience, a thing full both of awe and inspiration, to stand

before his class of Hindu students, and know that between him and them reverence for Christ is common ground. The public press of India today teems with manifestations of this changed attitude. . . . It is a new experience. This disappearance of animosity and bitterness amongst educated Hindus does not date back much more than five or six years."[1]

Is it a time for anxiety or joy? This movement is toward Christ and not toward Christianity. They are distinguishing between the "Christ" and the "ianity" of Christianity; the former is to them the kernel, and the latter is the shell. There are the decided beginnings of a Christ-cult within Hinduism. Undoubtedly, Christ is being added to their many other deities and avatars and religious heroes. Undoubtedly there are great dangers in such a process. Many would object; many do object.

Others like Paul rejoice. "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea and will rejoice."[2]

Or as Dr. Holland puts it: "Missionaries have sometimes expressed a nervousness lest this new receptivity towards the Gospel may be only

[1] W. E. S. Holland, *The Indian Outlook*, p. 193 f. (London: Edinburgh House Press. 1926)

[2] Phil. 1:18.

the opening of the door to absorb Jesus as the latest addition to the Indian Pantheon; a half-way house which may deter from further progress to full Christian truth. Only little faith that knows not the might of the living Jesus can thus fear. He is no passive recipient of worship. He is alive, regnant. His is new wine, that will burst the wineskins. 'The idols He shall utterly abolish. The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.' " [1]

I know of no better way to sum up the return of the Christ to Asia than in the words of a prominent Brahma Samajist, ex-judge of the High Court and still the outstanding lawyer in his province. Shaking my hand, he remarked, "We both belong to Another." He sent me his little booklet, "India's Response to Christ" in which is recorded:

"I believe in my heart of hearts that India cannot escape Christ. . . . No one can escape Christ. So has it been with me. . . . The hostility to Christ that made itself manifest in the first clash of the East and the West has disappeared. Years have passed and Christ has slowly and silently entered the hearts of the thinking section of the people. Slowly and surely he will enter the hearts of all. With the spread of edu-

[1] W. E. S. Holland, *The Indian Outlook*, p. 195.

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cation, with the spread of love, with the conquest of power and worldliness, Christ, I truly believe, will claim India as he will the whole world."

Then he adds piteously, "But alas the message lies shrouded in mystery. What with the doctrines and dogmas and rites and rituals and churches and creeds that divide the body of Christ, the sweet soul of Christ Jesus seems hidden from the heathen eye. I know not how many hundreds and thousands whom Christ would gladly have welcomed are sent away perturbed in spirit as I was once, feeling that the door is barred against them by strong iron bars of dogmas and doctrines. For, surely, Christ is not a hard dogma or a doctrine, but a veritable person—such an one as cannot but be accepted. Does it require much effort to draw near to the real Christ? O what a picture of simplicity, reality, holiness, sweetness, and love. . . . One sees him and simply cannot escape him." [1]

[1] P. K. Sen, *India's Response to Christ.* Published by The Brotherhood, Calcutta.

CHAPTER TWO

JESUS AND AHIMSA: HOW HE OVERCAME BY GENTLENESS

"Harmless as doves"

IN THE first chapter we saw the attractiveness of Jesus to the new intelligentsia of India. The remainder of the book deals with the implications of this attractiveness.

To them the Asiatic Christ comes not to destroy their ancient ideals and practices. His fan is not in his hand to thoroughly cleanse their threshing-floor of all there is on it. The ancient harvests have not been all tares and weeds. The rich crops of India's past are to be garnered for all time.

"Jesus Christ said, 'I come not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets.' Looking at Christ from a local or national point of view, as a Jew born in Bethlehem, one would say that by 'Law and the Prophets' he could only have meant the Mosaic Law and the prophets of the Old Testament. But there is an universal aspect of Christ. Christ came not only for the Jews but for the whole world. From this point of view by the 'Law' is meant the law enjoined by any

other religion of the world, and by the 'Prophets' must be meant the prophets of all times and of all countries. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. The Christ, therefore, that India is waiting to respond to is not the Christ which would remove all else from her heart before he could enter, but the Christ that would wipe out nought that was before, nay, fulfil and complete all. Is it necessary for the sake of accepting Christ to abjure or renounce all the other prophets of India? No. No. For then would Christ come to destroy. Gautama Buddha and his message, Yogacharya Krishna and his message, Sree Chaitanya and his message of Bhakti—all came from God and came to stay. So did all the other Prophets of the world. And Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil. It is in the harmony of these that the salvation of India consists and not in the destruction of any. Hence I cannot help feeling that Jesus came not to destroy that harmony of faiths which the world longs to see but to help towards its fulfilment. It is the Christ that fulfils all that India is waiting to respond to." [1]

I know not how you feel when hearing such words. I know how many sincere and noble missionaries feel. They shudder at such words. Per-

[1] P. K. Sen, *India's Response to Christ*, pp. 14, 15.

haps rightly so. It is, in their opinion, setting up the altars of Baal beside the altar of Jehovah. "The Lord our God is a jealous God." Christianity has never compromised on this: the uniqueness and sole lordship of Christ. It is too late to begin. It would be the opening of the sluice gates to a sea of paganism.

But are we not helpless in this matter? These men of India are not children. They will interpret Christ in their own way within or without the Christian Church and that interpretation will catch up the great words of India's religious past and weave these into the gospel of Christ. They have already begun to see in Christ the fulfilment of their great ideas and ideals. He stands alongside their great prophets and lawgivers.

This very thing I argued with certain young Hindu students of the University of Patna. "It is the dawn of a new day in the religious life of India," I said. "In your sky of Hinduism the stars still shine—the morning star and the great constellations: Krishna of the Gita and Rama and all the host of gods and *avatars* and *rishis* and great *acharyas* and *bhaktas*. But a new name is coloring the East. When it comes to its full rising, these others will fade before its light."

The students laughed, but took no offense.

Then one replied: "Christ was an Asiatic, and we claim him as ours. But he will shine alongside the great teachers of India, not dimming their light. The stars and the moon get along well together."

There is the heart of the whole thing! How bright is the Christ? Is it the moonrise or the sunrise in India? If Jesus is but reflected light, then Hinduism will surely hold him in her sky and he will be added to the many. If he is the lord of the day, then it is indeed the dawn and the inevitable paling of the stars. It all depends on the vitality of the Christ: a light in the world or the light of the world?

One other thing I know. It would help us greatly in our winning of India to Christ and in all world brotherhood if these men of India could see in the Christianity of the West what they see in Christ. Many harsh words they have spoken regarding us—whether just or unjust you shall judge. Could they but see something of the Asiatic Christ in us, they would not be cutting "Christianity" in two; or styling our religion, "Churchianity"; or saying with Mahatma Gandhi, "The message of Jesus was ineffective because the environment was unready to receive it." The great church universal would be the sooner in

coming if the words "Christian" and "Christlike" were only synonymous.

And so I come to the first of the great words with which they interpret Jesus—the word *Ahimsa*.

Ahimsa is an ancient word, still in good standing. Indian newspapers as well as religious books are constantly using it. It has two sides: a negative and a positive, and the negative is the commoner meaning. Negatively ahimsa means "non-injury," not taking life whether human or animal or bird or insect. In our day it has blossomed into the political-spiritual policy of "non-violence" as expounded by Mahatma Gandhi and his associates. Positively, it goes farther. It is the principle of active beneficence—gentle kindness to man and beast and bird and creeping thing. It is the power of gentleness.

Ahimsa is the very heart, "the fundamental ethical virtue," of Jainism. It is her first concern, first duty, and first vow. "The first vow the Jaina monk takes is that he will never destroy any living thing. This is also the first vow that both Buddhist and Brahman monks take. . . . 'Not to destroy life, either five-, four-, three-, or two-sensed, or immovable (i.e., one-sensed) even through carelessness, is considered as keeping the vow of non-killing.' . . . He must walk by

trodden paths, in which the presence of any insect could be detected. He must also be watchful in his speech and always speak in gentle, kindly ways, such as could never give rise to quarrels or murders. . . . When a monk receives or keeps anything that is necessary for religious duties, he must see that it has no insect life on it. And at night when putting away all that remains over from the food he has begged, he must deposit it and any other refuse so carefully, that no insect life is injured."

"To take any life seems to the Jaina the most heinous of all crimes and entails the most terrible punishment; yet the central thought of Jainism is not so much saving life as refraining from destroying. '*Ahimsā parama dharma*—Destroy no living creature! Injure no living creature! This is the highest religion!' declared a modern Jaina lecturer, and with almost Irish eloquence he goes on to say: 'I stand before you this noon to speak on a religion whose glory the dumb creatures, the cows, the goats, the sheep, the lambs, the hens, the pigeons, and all other living creatures, the beasts and the birds sing with their mute tongues; the only religion which has for thousands of years past advocated the cause of the silent-tongued animals: the only re-

ligion which has denounced slaughter of animals for sacrifice, food, hunting, or any purpose whatsoever.' . . . They even call their faith the religion of non-killing." [1]

They carry their ahimsa to extreme lengths—as when they recently fell upon Mahatma Gandhi for his advocacy of doing away with stray dogs as sources of infection and danger. When one is in the Jain country, he is in the land where "eating meat causes my brother to offend."

"Much, however, as the Jaina find to admire in Christianity, one of their tenets, that of Ahimsa, casts for them a great shadow across the Christian faith: they feel that the followers of Christ are stained with the sin of animal murder, and until this feeling is removed, they will never really understand the beauty of our religion." [2]

Nor is this true of the Jain alone. It is also generally true of all high-caste Hindus. They hold against us our meat-eating habits. I remember arguing with a dignified and cultured Hindu on the east coast who had confessed his belief that Christ was an avatar of God. I pressed him to follow Christ, if that were true. He raised two objections, based on ahimsa: the cursing of the fig tree and the destruction of the

[1] Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism*, pp. 234, 235, 116. (Oxford University Press. 1915)

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

swine. "Think of their panic of fear as they ran, and their pain as they drowned." To save men Jesus had inflicted suffering on animals. I brought up the case of a sick child and the doctor prescribing chicken broth. Should I sacrifice the child or the chicken? He answered quickly. "I had that very same experience when I was ill, and I refused to allow the chicken to be killed for me. I should rather die myself." I pressed him as to his child. He parried, "To save my child would be a selfish desire; it would really be to save myself the sorrow of losing my child. It is better I suffer the pain and the child die than that another life be taken." Then he added, "You are not reaching my heart."

Nor is this extreme. Mahatma Gandhi relates just such an experience in connection with his son. The Parsi doctor "said medicine would have little effect, but that eggs and chicken broth might be given with profit. I told him that we were all vegetarians and that I could not possibly give either of the two things to my son. Would he therefore recommend something else." [1]

Jainism and Hinduism are demanding of us at least this—to put it in the words of an Indian—"No one who does not give up his life to the interest and glorification of the higher Life has a

[1] *Young India*, May 5, 1927, p. 145.

right to take any kind of life whatever for his sustenance, be it vegetative or animal life."

In other words, "Inasmuch as we must accept the sacrifice of the animals in order to live, Christianity bids us receive that sacrifice as a sacrament, with reverence, and with a thankful heart, and bids us love the animals, and indeed if we do not we cannot love the Christ. Cruelty to animals means that in a sacramental universe we eat and drink the universal sacrifice without discerning the Lord's body, and therefore eat and drink damnation to ourselves."[1]

There is a new significance to lifting our eyes to heaven before we break the bread; to our "blessing" at the table. For life received must life be given.

In early Buddhism, which is an Indian religion, Gautama, the Buddha, passes to the positive in ahimsa, to gentleness and benevolence. He was the gentle Gautama, kind to all creatures. And in this capacity India still loves him. There is a considerable revival of Buddha-interest.

It was clearly seen in a moving-picture house in India where the story of his early life and "renunciation" were vividly and splendidly portrayed. The Hindu audience applauded with sympathy and delight—not at the renunciation nor

[1] Reprinted from *The Wicket Gate* by G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, by permission of the publishers in America, G. H. Doran Company.

at his preaching (which was indeed more Christian than Buddhist), but at the picture of Prince Gautama holding in his lap and stroking gently the head of a wounded deer.

Around and above Darjeeling, in the monasteries they still chant the blessings for all creatures, no man praying for himself. The "prayer flags," covered with written prayers, flap in the winds and the benevolent gentleness of the founder is carried thus to villages and fields, to flowing streams and lonely travellers along the road, to all those great and small who are bound to the wheel of life. This they still do in remembrance of him.

The early Buddhist literature has many references to a technique of gentleness:

"In the self-same way, disciples, a certain monk may be very, very kind, very, very gentle, very, very quiet, so long as no unpleasant words are uttered touching him. When, however, people begin to say unpleasant things of that monk—then is the time to see if the monk is kind, then it is to be seen if the monk is gentle, then it is to be seen if he is quiet. . . . Yea, disciples, even if highway robbers with a two-handed saw shall take and dismember you limb by limb, whoso grow darkened in mind thereby would not be ful-

filling my injunctions. Even then, disciples, thus must you school yourselves: 'Unsullied shall our minds remain, neither shall evil word escape our lips. Kind and compassionate ever, we will abide loving of heart nor harbour secret hate. And those robbers will we permeate with stream of loving thought unfailing; and forth from them proceeding, enfold and permeate the whole wide world with constant thoughts of loving kindness, ample, expanding, measureless, free from enmity, free from all ill will!' Yea, verily, thus, my disciples; thus must you school yourselves." [1]

"Whoso here causeth fellow-creatures pain
From this and from the other world, from both
This man may forfeit all they yield of good.
Whoso with loving heart compassion takes
On every fellow-creature, such a man
Doth generate of merit ample store." [2]

"With all am I a friend, comrade to all,
And to all creatures kind and merciful;
A heart of amity I cultivate
And ever in good will is my delight." [3]

[1] From the *Majjhima Nikaya*. Quoted by K. J. Saunders, *Gotama Buddha*, p. 110. (Oxford University Press. 1922)
[2] *Psalms of the Brethren*, p. 164. Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 280.

"Putting away the killing of living things Gotama the recluse holds aloof from the destruction of life. He has laid the cudgel and the sword aside, and ashamed of roughness, and full of mercy, he dwells compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life. . . . Thus does he live as a binder together of those who are divided, an encourager of those that are friends, a peace maker, a lover of peace, impassioned for peace, a speaker of words that make for peace. . . . Putting away rudeness of speech Gotama the recluse holds himself aloof from harsh language. Whatsoever word is blameless, pleasant to the ear, lovely, reaching the people—such are the words he speaks." [1]

In the great sects of popular Hinduism which have absorbed Buddhism, and with it much of the gentle spirit thereof, ahimsa still remains, with the negative emphasis predominant, although the positive is never completely lost. Hinduism has never drawn the sword in a war for religion.

There are three great names in the great sects, all associated with ahimsa.

There is *Rama,* the gentle warrior-king of Ayodhya, hero of the great epic, the *Ramayana.* He is gentle with all but the demon brood.

"After meeting the King of the vultures and

[1] *Dialogues of the Buddha,* Part I, p. 3, 5.

warmly renewing old friendship Rama . . . made himself a thatched cottage. From the time that Rama took up his abode there . . . the mountains, woods, rivers and lakes were suffused with beauty and day by day grew yet more exceedingly lovely. The many birds and deer were full of joy, and the bees added a charm by their sweet buzzing. . . . When the Lord had dismissed them the bears and monkeys all went their way, cherishing Rama's image in their heart, exulting with joy and making frequent prayer. The monkey king, the king of the bears, and all the other valiant monkey chiefs were so overcome by their feelings that they could not speak a word, while their eyes, streaming with tears, were fixed upon Rama's person so intently that they had no time to wink. When Rama perceived the strength of their affection, he took them all up into his chariot." [1]

All this I saw in the movies in Calcutta and marvelled at the excitement and enthusiasm of the Hindu crowd. I turned to a Marwari merchant, and said to him, "You must keep these pictures in India. The West would think these very silly." He looked surprised, then answered, "This is what we love."

There is *Krishna,* a hero of the other great

[1] *The Ramayana of Tulsi Das,* translated by F.S. Growse, pp. 384, 545.

epic, the *Mahabharata,* and much other sacred literature. Krishna is loved as Bal Gopala, the young cowherd of Brindavana. How India warms her heart at the picture:

"Balarama and Sree Krishna now entered upon their sixth year, and became of age to tend the bigger cows. Now, accompanied by their companions and headed by the cows, Balarama and Krishna penetrated deep into the holy forests of Brindavana, and began their rambles there and made them more holy and sacred by treading upon them. Sree Krishna also took up the flute for the first time, and poured forth divine music, which filled the whole forest of Brindavana and sent its thrilling influence into the various trees, creepers, hills and rivers, of the forest and into the hearts of the birds, the deer, peacocks, and other animals of the forest and filled them with ecstatic joy. . . . The wild deer in the forest, never accustomed to any kind of music, forgot their own bodies and giving up grazing, concentrate their mind on Sree Krishna. The calves give up the suckling of milk from their mother's udders, and become quite quiet and fix their eyes on Sree Krishna, while their mother-cows suspend their rumination and, lifting up their heads, stop grazing and fix their gaze upon Sree Krishna and appear listless, like pictures in a painting. The

birds, seated on branches of trees, lose themselves in ecstasy and close their eyes and concentrate their minds on Krishna and appear like Munis absorbed in meditation." [1]

To us of the West, India is exceedingly foolish over the cow. The cow is the national pet. It comes and goes freely as a privileged member of society—more privileged than the lower levels of human society—through the dwellings and courtyards, the eating and sleeping apartments, the streets of the village or city, and the holy temples and bathing-ghats. As it goes and comes it leaves its precious dung behind to be made into fuel-cakes for cooking food or into a paste for coating the floors. Hindu India loves and reverences the cow, perhaps for three reasons. The cow has been an object of worship for millenniums in a land where religious traditions have ruled. The cow has given to India milk, which "is a great friend of intellect and spiritual consciousness," [2] curds for her delicious sweetmeats, ghi for her frying fat, fuel, "dung-wash" for floors and walls, labor, and after natural death, hides. Mr. Gandhi in his new economic program for India lays stress chiefly on cotton-spinning and cows. And, third,

[1] Ch. Gopinatham B. A., *Sree Krishna Parabrahma Vicharana*, Book I, pp. 106, 116.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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the cow is the symbol of gentleness which is the true Indian spirit. In what other country could an outstanding leader write, "I do not want to live at the cost of the life even of a snake. I should let him bite me to death rather than kill him. . . . If in not seeking to defend myself against such noxious animals I die, I should die to rise again a better and a fuller man. With that faith in me how should I seek to kill a fellow-being in a snake? But this is philosophy. Let me pray and let my readers join in the prayer to God that He may give me strength to live up to that philosophy. For philosophy without life corresponding is like a body without life." [1]

They contrast the Indian cow with the British lion, beast of prey, and the American eagle, bird or prey, which typify us and our civilization.

Krishna is also the blue-fleshed charioteer, driving into the great battle. This forms the *motif* of the Gita, India's favorite scripture. It is Arjuna, the warrior sitting behind him, who pleads for non-killing:

"Neither, O Krishna, do I see any good in killing these my own people in battle. I desire neither victory, nor empire, nor yet pleasure." To whom answers Krishna, "Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquests and defeat,

[1] Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*, 1927.

the same engage thou then in battle. So shall thou incur no sin." [1]

So Arjuna goes to the killing, while Krishna remains outside the slaughtering.

Then there is *Siva*—the great god, the manifold god, mysterious energy of destruction and reproduction, philosopher, ascetic and dancer. In the South are seen images of Siva, but his general representation throughout India is the phallic emblem of reproduction. In close association is the ever-faithful reclining Nandi, the bull. His female consorts, as his creative energy (Sakti), may have their bloody and violent and even licentious worship, but Siva has caught up much of the bloodless worship of early Buddhism. He is worshipped by flowers and fruit, ghi and sweetmeats, leaves and water.

It is Ahimsa that keeps India from nationhood —ahimsa and caste. Ahimsa divides the Hindus and the Moslems; caste divides the Hindus. The Hindu two-thirds of India's population will have no slaughter of cattle and will not forgive the other third which enjoys its beef. The Moslem and the Hindu are split asunder—on what to us is a mere detail of life, but to them is all important. I found in all India only one Hindu who,

[1] The *Bhagavad Gita*, I, 31 and II, 38. Translated by Swami Swarupananda.

in private conversation, advocated the eating of beef and his reasons were of interest. "It is the only way to bring Hindu and Moslem together in national unity. Here the Hindus must yield. I have observed," he went on, "that those countries in which cows are killed and eaten produce the best cows; cows are really protected and improved thereby. And the fact that beef is digested shows it is fit food for the human stomach." But he dare not publish such advocacy, for all Hinduism on this point would be against him. Ahimsa is of the very nature of things.

Of course Hinduism is inconsistent in this as in all other things. There is the taking of life, among the lower castes and in Sakta Bengal there is much eating of meat of goats and sheep, there is bloody slaughter of buffaloes and goats in worship, there is an amazing amount of cruelty.[1] Ahimsa, while of the very nature of things, has not yet conquered this people. Hindu India has refused gentleness to her own sons and daughters that are lowly born because they are lowly born. The law of Karma has cut the threads of ahimsa. Of cows it is written, "A bull is the very incarnation of heaven. A cow is the supreme refuge of all creatures. The man who sells or steals a cow, or who eats her flesh will suffer in hell for

[1] See Katherine Mayo, *Mother India*, chapters 18, 19, 20. (Harcourt, Brace. 1927)

as many years as the cow has hairs on her body. The last thing at night, the first thing in the morning, that a pious man ought to do is to repeat the names of cows, bowing before them in all reverence the while. Vasishta says that the givers of cows [to Brahmins] will be welcomed in heaven by a thousand lovely maidens whose one object will be to minister to their pleasure. The goddess of Prosperity lives in the urine and dung of cows." [1] Yet in this same thirteenth book of the Great Epic we read of the untouchable out-caste —that it will take his soul 11,011,000 years at best before it is possible to be born even as a degraded Brahmin, that the Scriptures prescribe no religious duties in which such people can share, and that for a Brahmin to teach him is a great sin.

But this is not the point—whether Hinduism has succeeded or failed. The point is this: to Hindus the World-Teacher must be a man of gentleness; the World-Savior must lift with gentle hands. He must be the Prophet of Ahimsa.

In Jesus they see gentleness and they love him. He is no lion with teeth and claws, and no eagle with sharp talons and curved beak. And John stood and cried, "Behold the lamb of God."

True, there are difficulties even here. The fig-

[1] J. M. MacFie, *The Mahabharata. A Summary*, p. 192 f.

tree and the swine and the killing of the fatted calf give their trouble, as we have seen; the cleansing of the temple with the whip of cords and the oft-repeated "Woe unto you, Pharisees" are not easy to explain. Yet the difficulty is not serious. As Lala Lajpat Rai, outstanding Hindu nationalist in the Punjab, put it in conversation, "There is much in common between the Christ and the spirit of Hinduism. Christ was akin to the spirit of India in his toleration, his social service, and his broad humanity. Nothing in the person or character of Jesus offends me. Certain words of his have a tinge of militarism, but not more than are found in the words of any great reformer. I do not care for Paul's letters," he went on, "because in them for the first time I find militant Christianity which has had such a tremendous vogue. To me non-violence is the force of love, non-resistant to a large degree yet resistant when the proper time comes. I am not a thoroughgoing pacifist yet stand for *ahimsa,* as the force of love. In this regard Christ appeals to the Hindu, and Christianity and Hinduism should draw together in closer rapprochement." [1]

Negatively, however, there is an objection. "I have this against him," said a Hindu lawyer, "he

[1] November 12, 1925.

has left us no third commandment, 'Thou shalt love the lower animals.' "

The gentleness of Jesus is compounded both of non-injury of others and of active beneficence. It has three striking characteristics:

1. Jesus realizes the source and basis of all gentleness. There by the river Jordan on the day of the great turning of his life, he discovers a gentle God. The voice is a tender voice, and the Holy Spirit descends upon him, not as a cleansing fan or as a raging fire but as a dove, the bird that India knows and loves. It was the spirit of gentleness that came upon him from a gentle God.

So an Indian writes: "There is no bird like the dove. The dove is the bird of gentleness, quiet and sweet, singing in low calm notes in the morning and evening tide. Among birds or animals no creature can approach to the dignified gentleness of the dove. . . . The spirit of gentleness, melancholy, innocence, love, holiness, and hope is symbolized by the dove, and hence in the shape of a dove the grace of God lighted on the head of the baptized Messiah in the holy stream of Jordan. In that spirit did Jesus preach and act as long as he lived among men. Meek, gentle, innocent, loving, sorrowing, retired, pure, and self-sacrificing, Jesus showed that he had truly received in his heart the Spirit which descended

upon his head, in the form of the holy dove, at the baptism of John."[1]

He went on the supposition that God was gentleness; that the power of God was gentle power. "The Spirit *driveth* him forth . . . and the angels *ministered*." He committed his life to that, lived his life from that base-line—and we date time from the man who first built his life in every act about the gentleness of God.

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"[2]—he takes it out of the mouth of God, as one of the words whereby men live. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust."[3] "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need."[4] He is gentle toward the prodigal and his gross sins of the senses; He is gentle toward the stay-at-home with his subtle sins of the disposition.[5] "Father forgive them"[6]—he knew the gentleness of the Father-heart that could answer such a prayer.

2. Jesus realizes the full extent of gentleness. His hands are not tied by any superior law of action (*Karma*). His law of action works in an opposite way. He goes in gentleness to those that are out-caste physically and out-caste mentally,

[1] P. C. Mozoomdar, *The Oriental Christ*, p. 55 f.
[2] Matthew 9:13. [4] Matthew 6:32. [6] Luke 23:34.
[3] Matthew 5:45. [5] Luke 15:11–32.

out-caste socially and out-caste morally; to the sick and the sinful; to harlots and hirelings; to Samaritans; to revilers and persecutors; to secret and open enemies; to "those who have trespassed against us"; to children and women of every estate. Over them all he casts the mantle of gentleness.

O brother-heart of Jesus—
That seeks the least and lost and last,
Reshaping each new future from its past;
That does not judge mankind by mood or tense,
But covers every life with Providence;
Whose flaming love guards Heaven's open gate,
Only from those who cherish pride and hate.
"On this wise pray with me,
'Father of our humanity' "—
O brother-heart of Jesus!

O mother-heart of Jesus—
That broods upon the city of my life,
And notes its blatant brawls and subtler strife,
Its Pharisaic pride and Sadducean greed,
Its harlot-thoughts and beggars' need;
That knows its Temple less a house of prayer
Than mart for commerce of this world and care;
Yet weeping says to me
"Lo I would gather thee"—
O mother-heart of Jesus!

O father-heart of Jesus—
That welcomes me on every dusty road,
Up which I hasten, timorous with my load
Of conscious guilt, and reinstates me there
Into my birthright—ring and garment fair,
And reckons not my swineherd past, for joy
That love misspent has found its true employ;
"Make merriment abound,
He that was lost is found"—
O father-heart of Jesus!

O neighbor-heart of Jesus—
That meets me on the hard, sun-scorched descents
Where, battered long, my coward heart consents
To life's routine and days of puny size,
Dreaming no more of sharing high emprize.
He stoops and pours his oil into my draining veins,
Shoulders me up and staunches all their pains;
"Here in this wayside inn,
Your freshened course begin"—
O neighbor-heart of Jesus!

And what of the lower animals? Does he not cover them with the reach of his gentleness? He does not despise his Father's creatures. It is with a voice of tenderness he speaks of God's pensioners, the little sparrows worth only half a

farthing apiece to men, but worth vastly more than that to God, who watches over against His Treasury; of the distressed ox, vagrant sheep, the ass and its colt, the foxes and the birds with their free rentals, the lambs before wolves, the improvident birds that fill the world with song but have no thought of sowing or reaping or garnering; of the Samaritan's patient beast that foots it silently to the inn. Jesus treats them all with naturalness: no birds or beasts are made to talk in fables, the sheep know the shepherd's voice and follow silently, the lilies and the evening sky are aflame with God's glory, but it is man that interprets their evangel of color. The material world is not distorted in the picture; his pity is not sentimental.

3. Jesus realizes the power there is in gentleness. There is no softness in the gentleness of Jesus. It is concentrated force.

India long ago knew the power in gentleness —the soul-force that plays without hindrance in non-violence. Her greatest names are not her conquering warriors and kings, but gentle souls. True gentleness is based on calm not storm; on the calm of a deep peace; on the calm of a deeper power. Nature works quietly; noise is the exceptional. Great forces are held silent in the gen-

tleness of God. The noisy man, like the noisy motor, is the man of little power.

The calm of Jesus is a deep lake nestling in the hills of Trust. "My Father is greater than I"—and from that reservoir there flows his power. His is the life that can afford to be gentle because it is surcharged with strange power.

Yet his gentleness is not passive but active. It can even be violent gentleness. It can break out in storm in the face of that which destroys human life and lessens human values, for even storms have their place in the vast economy of the gentleness of God. They could take his cloak, his coat, his blood, his youth, his health, his life; they could smite him on cheek or head or hand—but let them touch a shamed woman, or a man with a withered hand, or a "little one," or block the way of simple worshippers who come to pray, or lay too heavy a burden on sincere men and women who seek to do the will of God—and his gentleness blazes into anger. It is the "wrath of the Lamb." Anything less would be violence to the other party, to those in need. He ceases to be gentle when he can no longer love and shield "his own" unto the end.

The gentleness of Jesus with enemies is never surrender, but the very stoutest opposition. Here we of the West have misunderstood him, while

India understands him perfectly. India deeply treasures those words of his which cause us hot-bloods, so recently out of ceaseless tribal warfare which has become national warfare, to be offended in him; those words which we hush and soft-pedal, of which we are ashamed as though they drained a man of his virility: "But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two." [1]

Such seeming surrender is merely bringing into action the artillery of love, which God being what He is, is more deadly than any artillery of hate. Gentleness is far more destructive than passion, for it controls vaster power. Jesus never surrendered to evil. His whole strategy is opposition, and his tactics love. His lambs were to be stronger than the wolves they faced; his fishermen and publicans more powerful than governors and kings. Imprisonment and suffering and death only bring their power into play. "When you lift the Son of Man up in the air, then you will know that I am what I say. . . . And if I am lifted up from the ground, I will draw all

[1] Matthew 5:39–41.

men to myself." [1] He put up the sword of Peter for the sharper, more cutting edge of the "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

"Be ye therefore harmless as doves" for there is tremendous force in such harmlessness. "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth." "Learn of me for I am gentle and lowly of heart."

India understands his words. Rabindranath Tagore speaks of "the immense powers of the meek." Mahatma Gandhi based his whole Satyagraha movement on an ahimsa that loosed soul-force, not brute force. His pacifism was not passivity. "It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer, but it means the putting of one's soul against the will of the tyrant." Truth is vindicated "not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on one's self." Such truth-force (satyagraha) is irresistible, because the nature of man is essentially good not bad. It cannot "possibly resist the final appeal of suffering voluntarily endured for the sake of truth. This has been his one fundamental and unshaken faith." [2]

And so this gentle man, "the gentlest of human beings, living a life of extreme poverty in his re-

[1] John 8:28 and 12:32 (Goodspeed's translation, University of Chicago Press. 1923)

[2] C. F. Andrews in *International Review of Missions*, April 1924, p. 193.

ligious retreat at Sabarmati, where every bird and beast and living creature [and out-caste too] is dear to him and little children are the most precious of God's gifts" with his "fiery energy of spirit which is almost volcanic" reminds India of Jesus Christ, interprets Jesus Christ to India. "Gandhi is the Christ"—we heard it again and again. What they mean is this, using once more the oft-quoted words of a Hindu editor and social reformer:

"More than nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ was nailed upon the Cross by a Roman governor. The orthodox Jews who instigated Pilate to commit this infamous crime were no doubt satisfied that the great movement which Christ had set on foot had failed. Failed! It was Roman justice that had failed, it was Jewish bigotry that had failed. An empire that had ceased to heed the voice of justice and humanity in the pursuit of its own selfish interests which are always ephemeral, is like a rotten tree which but awaits the first passing blast to come to the ground. The Roman Empire fell, and upon its ruins the Church of Christ rose to a great height of power. And today though organized Christianity but feebly reflects the spirit of its Master, the personality of the Master Himself stands

forth before all the world with a compelling grandeur.

"Never before have so many earnest minds of all races and creeds turned to Him for light and guidance in their perplexities. The number and insight of the new lives of Christ are alone evidence of this fresh and deepened interest in His life and teaching. But the most impressive proof of it is that Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu, has sought for the first time in history to apply the Master's teaching to politics as the best means of raising the people of India to a consciousness of their duty to themselves and to humanity. . . .

"Mahatma Gandhi's movement has made the central teaching of Christ known and cherished in quarters to which a hundred years of the propaganda of Christian missions had not been able to penetrate. And it has presented it in a form readily assimilable to the Indian mind. Not only among Hindus but among Indian Christians also are being revealed a new meaning and a new purpose in the message of the Galilean Prophet, not antagonistic to or destructive of their precious national heritage, but setting it forth in its full intrinsic worth and value." [1]

Have we been true to Jesus? How gentle is our Western Christianity?

[1] K. Natarajan in *Indian Social Reformer*, December 1923.

India is brutally frank. They do not see the gentleness of Christ in us.[1] We can no longer camouflage our civilization with a few gentle missionaries. Asia knows too much. They are beginning to know the story—how Christianity as it started out on its world-mission fell into the hands of Romans and barbarians of the North, races that knew not the first letter of ahimsa. Christianity took a risk, a glorious risk, to prove the vitality of the gentleness of Jesus. If it could survive under such conditions and among such peoples, it could survive anywhere on earth.

Then Christianity fell into the hands of feudalism and selfish nationalism, of cruel commercialism and greedy imperialism. Bound by these, in company with these, it passed to the ancient lands of Asia and the new-found lands of Africa.

Christianity fell into the hands of hard bigotry, of fanatical traditionalism, of denominational and sectarian jealousy, of ecclesiastical ambition.

Christianity fell into the hands of a race-prejudice that spits in a colored face, and crowds the colored races off the sidewalks of the world.

[1] "In repudiating the teaching of non-resistance the West has made the pure and spiritual religion of Jesus muscular and militant." K. S. Naidu in The Fellowship, Sept. 1927. He goes on: "Even in India, we have only learnt to pity and love Jesus. . . . If we are to profit by his noble mission on earth, we have to admire and worship him."

Christianity fell into the hands of "efficiency," which is as destructive as it is constructive, which continually counts its money bags, and totals its columns of statistics.

Christianity fell into the hands of competition, which sets man against man in strife, group against group, race against race.

Christianity fell into the hands of war, more and more brutal with each decade.

All these ruffians put on the gentle Jesus the purple robe and the crown of thorns; they placed the reed of seeming sovereignty in his hands, and bowed the knee Sunday by Sunday in mock homage and worship.

But all this to Asia is not the religion of Jesus. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you." They call it "Churchianity."

The gentleness of Jesus survives in all this mockery and this crucifixion. The Lamb is stronger than the wolves that tear it. His Golden Rule, his Golden Parable of the good Samaritan—we are beginning at last to comprehend. There is a new gentleness to childhood with which the Christ identifies himself; there is a new gentleness to child-races, written into mandates by the best conscience of our day; there is a new gentleness to those in need because of famine and fire and earthquake and flood.

But we must change even more and vastly more. There can be no world-state or culture or brotherhood except on the basis of ahimsa, on the basis of the gentleness of Jesus. The East (India and China) demands peace on this basis, so deeply have Buddha and Confucius and Lao Tze done their work. The West secretly approves it. By ballot our greatest heroes are Louis Pasteur in Europe and Abraham Lincoln in America—men of outstanding gentleness.

On no other basis is there peace. Asia is one long cry, *"Carthago delenda est"*—Western political and economic domination must be destroyed. The recovery of racial self-respect is on. The tides are rising. In China they are dashing against the breakwaters. Japan and India are sensitive about our immigration policy and the exclusion of Asiatics *as Asiatics*. "Our Asiatic Christ" is one phase of this racial sensitiveness. "Do you not exclude the Christ? he was Asiatic too," they ask. "Exclude us," they go on, "if it is necessary for your national and economic welfare, but at least put it on some basis that is not an insult to our racial self-respect." And that basis, for our own welfare and for theirs, must be in harmony with the gentle purposes of Jesus Christ.

The lamb in us must conquer the lion, the ox

in us must conquer the bear, the weaned child must close the adder's den. We must open and open and open again to the Gospels till we learn their "Thou shalt love . . . do good . . . pray." We must learn of him that is "gentle and humble in heart" till we too have found our "souls refreshed."

We must sheathe the sword of Charlemagne, and of the "most illustrious *Christian* kings," of *Christian* empires and *Christian* republics—the sword which in ignorance or in mockery we have buckled on the Christ, and make way more simply and more fittingly for him who in the majesty of gentleness comes riding into our new world.

CHAPTER THREE

THE YOGA OF JESUS

"My cup and . . . my baptism"

ANOTHER ancient word in India's religious history, a word not unknown wherever Indian influence has penetrated, is Yoga. Yoga stands as one of the great pillars in the temple of Indian religious thought and practice. Around it, in fact, has been built one of the six orthodox or standard systems of Hindu philosophy.

In general, however, yoga is wider than any one specific system, and permeates all Hindu thinking. Like ahimsa, it has two faces: a negative and a positive. It is an emptying and a filling. Its primary meaning is a binding; its secondary meaning amounts to a loosening. It has been defined as yoking, restraint: "the force of the flying passions was felt to be as uncontrollable as that of a spirited steed, and thus the word yoga which was originally applied to the control of steeds began to be applied to the control of the senses." [1] But it is more than restraint; it is "a harnessing of the senses and mind from the falsely

[1] S. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 226. (Cambridge University Press. 1922)

manifold objects and thoughts, and at the same time union with the unitary blissful Self." [1]

Yoga, then, is a binding for a purpose; that purpose is a larger life—union with that which is greater than ourselves—freedom. The primary meaning of the binding of self we shall discuss in this chapter; the secondary meaning of freedom in God is reserved for the next.

India demands that there be in religion restraint and discipline. She has no respect for the religion that does not have these. There must be some strait gate and narrow way into life eternal; there must be some denial that costs heavily; some losing of life to find it again. Bliss and freedom can be reached by no wide gate and broad way; these lead to sorrow and their end is futility. Life as it ought to be has its birth only when travail and labor have come upon life as it is. Yoga, then, like ahimsa, is of the very nature and fitness of things.

And so Hinduism has thrown up its wicket-gates and narrow ways. There are three historic paths (*marga*) that lead away unto life eternal, and each has its restraints and severe disciplines. Each restrains body and mind and soul. From the land of sorrow to the land of bliss; from the bondage of the temporal and the spatial to the

[1] R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 68. (Oxford University Press. 1921)

freedom of the eternal and the universal; from the endlessly-repeated cycles of rebirth to the quiet calm where no one dares to threaten "ye must be born again"—three ancient roads ascend. These are the ways of the fathers. Take your choice. Choose the path best suited to your feet.

The first, the oldest, is the way of works (*karma marga*). It is in many ways the least satisfactory and the least sure.

To the Brahmin of old it was the binding of a minute ritual, a hard discipline of phrase and ceremonial act. The memory is taxed to its extreme limit. Whole libraries now contain this ancient lore of cult and magic, of sacrifice and offering, of chant and incantation. Every syllable of these sacred books is shot through with magic power and must be handled carefully. A slip of the tongue, and all the virtue is spilled and lost. A Brahmin told me of his father's funeral and how he hired one set of priests to chant the proper passages and another set to censor, to watch for syllables mispronounced or heedlessly omitted, so that the whole, faultlessly performed, might bring the proper benefits.

To the common man, it is the discipline prescribed by *Dharma,* the "very word for right and law and virtue." [1] It is the Law of Right Usage,

[1] E. W. Hopkins, *Ethics of India*, p. 64. (Yale University Press. 1924)

where religion dictates in all the details of life. It is the binding of all caste rules and observances, of birth and marriage and funeral rites, of the feeding of Brahmins, of worship at home and in the temples, of pilgrimages to sacred cities and sacred rivers, of religious bathing and religious shaving of the head and religious brushing of the teeth, and the proper discharge of all the multifarious religious duties which are written into the great law-codes and into the traditions of Hinduism. It is a vast discipline of life, cheerfully accepted, without the name and yet with the spirit of yoga, which does not bring release but merely a more favorable opportunity in the next life to escape from the whens and whys and wheres of mortal living. It offers no freedom here and now to the man who does his duty by family and caste and priestly overseers.

To him who would escape by a shorter and surer way, the way of knowledge (*jnana marga*) offers itself. It is a short-cut to release, and like all short-cuts in the mountains is rough and steep. Only the hardy-souled, the determined, dare attempt it. It is no way for the man burdened with care of family or this world's goods. It is the yoga proper—demanding this and promising that. It finds expression in the great philosophies of India.

The classic and finest descriptions of this *jnana marga* are found in the Upanishads. These ancient scriptures, twenty-five centuries old and more, preach the gospel of escape by knowledge. Not the knowledge that comes from study, but the knowledge that comes from within. It is intuitive realization. Suddenly as you wander on the mountains of your own soul you come upon the burning bush of the consciousness of the divine within yourself—that the Atman (cosmic soul) is all, there is nothing else but the Atman, your atman (soul) is the Atman whole and undivided. No longer are there any distinctions of "I" and "you" and "he" and "it," nor any restrictions—the Atman fills all and is all. The little drop of self has found the infinite Ocean, where it loses itself in a freedom that is boundless, in a freedom that is absolute.

Ah, but the binding is severe ere one can reach the vision ineffable of union of atman with Atman. The yoga discipline binds the senses and binds the mind—meditation, contemplation, and concentration—till with the terrific focusing of all the vitality, physical and mental, upon the one spot: "That art thou," the spot begins to glow, to smoke, to burst into flame, the flame which consumes the self of man.

"Holding his body steady with the three [upper parts] erect,
And causing the senses with the mind to enter into the heart,
A wise man with the Brahma-boat should cross over
All the fear-bringing streams.

"Having repressed his breathings here in the body, and having his movements checked,
One should breathe through the nostrils with diminished breath.
Like that chariot yoked with vicious horses,
His mind the wise man should restrain undistractedly.

. . . . . .

"Even as a mirror stained with dust
Shines brilliantly when it has been cleansed,
So the embodied one, on seeing the nature of the soul (Atman)
Becomes unitary, his end attained, from sorrow freed.

"When with the nature of the self, as with a lamp,
A practiser of Yoga beholds here the nature of Brahma,
Unborn, steadfast, from every nature free ——

By knowing God one is released from all fetters!" [1]

Or again, in one of the great passages:

"Verily, in the beginning this world was Brahma, the limitless One—limitless to the east, limitless to the south, limitless to the west, limitless to the north, and above and below, limitless in every direction. Truly for him east and the other directions exist not, nor across, nor below, nor above.

"Incomprehensible is that supreme Soul (Atman), unlimited, unborn, not to be reasoned about, unthinkable—He whose soul is space. In the dissolution of the world He alone remains awake. From that space He, assuredly, awakes this world, which is a mass of thought. It is a thought by Him, and in Him it disappears.

"His is that shining form which gives heat in yonder sun and which is the brilliant light in a smokeless fire, as also the fire in the stomach which cooks food. For thus has it been said: 'He who is in the fire, and he who is here in the heart, and he who is yonder in the sun—he is one.'

"To the unity of the One goes he who knows this.

"The precept for effecting this (unity) is this:

[1] *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, 2:8, 9, 14, 15. Hume's translation.

restraint of the breath, withdrawal of the senses, meditation, concentration, contemplation, absorption. Such is said to be the sixfold Yoga. By this means

When a seer sees the brilliant
Maker, Lord, Person, the Brahma-source,
Then, being a knower, shaking off good and evil,
He reduces everything to unity in the supreme
Imperishable." [1]

It is beyond the common man—this hard way of knowledge:

"He, however, who has not understanding
Who is unmindful and ever impure,
Reaches not the goal,
But goes on to transmigration (samsāra).

He, however, who has understanding
Who is mindful and ever pure,
Reaches the goal
From which he is born no more." [2]

[1] *Maitri Upanishad*, 6:17, 18. Hume's translation.

[2] *Katha Upanishad*, 3:7, 8. Hume's translation. It needs, perhaps, to be stated that in the *specific* Yoga philosophy, one of the six orthodox systems, and more closely related to the Samkhya system than to any other, the stages of liberation are eight rather than six: forbearance from certain evils, helpful religious observances, postures of the body conducive to meditation, regulation of the breath,

The third is the path of allegiance to a personal God of grace—the *bhakti marga*. This is an easier path opened to human frailty, and yet with its severities as you shall hear. This is the path despised for centuries by "the wise and the prudent," by the Scribes and Pharisees of the *karma marga* and the philosophers and ascetics of the *jnana marga*, the path opened unto babes.

It came as a new gospel that swept India from south to north—a "good tidings" for the common folk, for the "once born" as well as the "twice born," even for the out-caste who is religiously and socially not born at all. The poor heard it gladly. It gathered about the ancient names, about the god Vishnu and his "incarnations" (*avatars*) or manifestations in the popular heroes, Rama and Krishna, and about the "great

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withdrawing the sense-organs from sense-objects, attention or fixing the mind on some external object and holding it there, contemplation or a steady and consistent stream of thoughts, and concentration or "meditative absorption." The goal also is not intuitive knowledge of the identity of the self with the Self (Brahma) but intuitive knowledge of an eternal distinction between the world of souls (Purusha) and the world of matter, whether gross or subtle (Prakriti). In this process, Isvara, Lord, the highest Being, plays an important part, not as the end of yogic effort, but as the helper of those who are His devotees in their progress toward liberation. He is "a Soul untouched by affliction, action, fruit, or stock of desert, who of His own will assumed a body in order to create, and originated all secular or Vaidic traditions, and is gracious toward those living beings who are burned in the charcoal of mundane existence." (Madhava in *Sarva-Darsana-Sangraha*, Cowell and Gough, p. 232.)

god," Siva, the "propitious." In the north it was principally Vishnu-bhakti, and in the south Siva-bhakti.

India burst into song—the songs so dear today to the heart of its peoples. Not in the ancient and sacred Sanskrit they now sang, but in their own rich vernaculars. And they sang of salvation, release, freedom, joy. On the one side, the divine, it was salvation by grace. On the other side, the human, it was salvation by devoted, enthusiastic allegiance. In the next chapter we shall look more closely at the great salvation—here it is the binding and severity that we are after.

For the sake of this God of grace, these "sectarians" bound themselves with a *bhakti-yoga* in two ways.

The more intense counted nothing dear unto themselves. Men of caste, they despised caste and broke caste; men of home, they despised home and broke home. They took the "yellow robe" or nakedness, and the dusty road. They ate leanly out of their begging bowls. They took the mark of their god upon their foreheads—the three perpendicular lines of Vishnu or the three horizontal lines of Siva. To intensify their devotion they took to drugs,[1] and to unspeakable emo-

[1] One of them naïvely remarked to me, "I cannot sing with spirit this morning for I have not yet had my *gānja*."

tional excesses, sexually or artificially induced. The turbulent stream of their devotion ran muddy. What with severe repressions by means of posturings and hypnotic exercises combined with artificial excitations—the whip and the sedative simultaneously applied—it is no wonder that minds broke, and that Hindus themselves today denounce the evils of these so-called "yogis."

The less intense but more practical stayed in caste and in home, but made their renunciation. They renounced all the dividends of life; they carried on the business, landholding or trading or what not, in the name of and for the sake of their God, and with no eye to achievements or profits. They worked "without motives and without caring for results." "To work alone we have the right, but not to the fruit thereof." They did the work of the world without thought of the world. They did not bring the first-fruits as the measure of their devotion, but all the fruits. They did not talk of the tithe or the tenth; they did not deal in fractions when it came to God. They dared not consider any part their own.

This is the yoga of the Gita as expounded by Sri Krishna himself to whom works are offered in devotion. It is a yoga of works in the spirit of bhakti.[1] The true binding, however, is not that

[1] It is more commonly called the Karma Yoga of the Gita.

of the works performed, but of the throbbing passion for the Lord.

Sri Krishna speaks:

"Actions do not taint Me, nor have I any thirst for the result of action. He who knows Me thus is not fettered by action.

"Knowing thus, the ancient seekers after freedom also performed action. Do thou, therefore, perform action, as did the ancients in olden times.

"He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is intelligent among men, he is a Yogi and a doer of all action.

"Whose undertakings are all devoid of plan and desire for results, and whose actions are burnt by the fire of knowledge, him, the Sages call wise.

"Forsaking the clinging to fruits of action, ever satisfied, depending on nothing, though engaged in action, he does not do anything.

"Without hope, the body and mind controlled and all possessions relinquished, he does not suffer any evil consequences, by doing mere bodily action." [1]

"Whoever with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept;—the devout gift of the pure-minded.

"Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest,

[1] The *Bhagavad Gita*, 4:14, 15, 18–21. Translated by Swami Swarupananda.

whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering to me.

"Thus shalt thou be freed from the bondages of actions, bearing good and evil results: with the heart steadfast in the Yoga of renunciation, and liberated, thou shalt come unto Me." [1]

This is the yoga of much of the neo-Hinduism which looks to the Gita as its peculiar scripture along which it can safely form its lines. Strangely enough, with the modern world breaking into India through every door with its gospel of work and the rich fruitage of work, India still reverences the man "whose undertakings are all devoid of plan and desire for results," who "though engaged in action, does not do anything." He is the man who by a genuine repression—in the world and yet not of the world—has horizons for his vision far beyond the things of sense.

I am not discussing how well the discipline is carried out in India—whether of works, or knowledge, or passionate allegiance. Hinduism like every system engined by "the will of man" breaks seriously between every mile-post. This is what I would emphasize, and it is of vast importance: Hinduism has prepared the way for a hard binding and a marvellous freedom. Hinduism has

[1] *Ibid.*, 9:26–28.

gone before proclaiming, "'Man shall not live by bread alone.' In the sweat of his soul shall he eat the bread that cometh down from heaven."

So India asks: Does Jesus come with any word that both chills the heart and warms it? For India must have both.

Comes he with an easy binding—and freedom? Then he will fail in India as Mohammed has failed. Islam, when the first conquering rush was over, was brought to a standstill and a stalemate. Islam knows no "yellow robe" or nakedness. Its robes are easy, flowing. "God is indulgent, merciful"—He cuts His demands to match man's frailty. What does Jesus mean, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light"? Is "rest unto your souls" the method or the end of his yoga, his harnessing? "Ask . . . seek . . . knock"—is it all so easy as that? Do not the cry of pain, the bleeding, wandering feet, the hammering at the door of release have any part in him?

Comes he with a tight binding—but without freedom? Some new legal code? Some hard morality? Some unattractive piety? With a mouth filled with "Thou shalts" and "Thou shalt nots"? India wants no code of ethics. She has never emphasized morality. There are no great prophets of righteousness in India's religious past. No Amos has ever thundered in her Bethels. She

has never put righteousness in God, for righteousness being in the world of action would limit the Limitless. Ethics *per se* she calls "the completion of restraint"; it is a prison-house of the self that has no windows; a river that does not wind to the sea. India wants joy, not morality; beatitude, not commandment. If to Jesus ethics is an *end in itself,* then his word falls on deaf ears and hardened hearts. Let him pass on to China, the land of superior conduct, and leave India on the side.

Comes he both with the binding and with the freedom? Then India will sit and listen. She will pay for the freedom he offers, if he sets a stiff price upon it. For the treasure laid up in heaven she expects to pay with treasure laid down here. So India asks: Was he bound and was he free? Did he lose his life and did he find it? Did he lay down his life and did he take it up again? Did he deny himself and in that denial find a tremendous affirmation? Was his speech both "Nay, nay" and "Yea, yea"?

So we come to the "binding" of Jesus. All four gospels really begin with his binding, his restraint; in Matthew and Luke and John what precedes is prologue and introduction. Here is where the story really begins, where the curtain rises on his ministry. Our most ancient document

(Mark) takes us immediately down to the Jordan valley, and we read:

"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." [1]

Long before he was nailed to the cross, he was bound with a binding he could not and would not break.

A tremendous religious experience was that baptism by the Jordan. "Thou art my *beloved* son." He was caught in the love of God. The yoga of the love of God was henceforth on him. "O Love that wilt not let me go" becomes the epitome of the four gospels.

That binding utterly changed his life. It tore him loose from Nazareth, knocked the carpenter's tools out of his hand and put a strange new power in their place. It brought him back to Galilee with a gospel on his lips and an unheard of authority in his manner. And the end is not yet. The mystery of that yoga is still unfolding —century by century.

[1] Mark 1:9–11. American Standard Version. (Thos. Nelson & Sons.)

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For in that amazing experience all is infolded that was later unfolded; the Kingdom of God as inrush of the divine into human life; the Trinity as an experience—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—long before it was a doctrine; the Cross as the end of that day's committal of self to any sacrifice that the new age proclaimed by John should impose upon him; the resurrection in a world of open heavens, without limiting horizons of space and time; and Pentecost with its new powers and enthusiasms.

The yoga of Jesus is the binding and the restraint of the love of God. Not his love for God—that would be *bhakti*. Not God's love for him, but what is more tremendous: God's love in him. The very yoga that God binds upon Himself, the yoga of love that gives unto the uttermost, he bound that day upon his *"beloved Son."* Henceforth the love of God flows in his veins. Put your fingers on any artery of the life of Jesus and feel the beating of the heart of God. That heart is love.

How lightly we say it: God is love. It is comforting, but it is not comfortable. The most costly and utterly bruising thing on earth is the love of God. It is like falling into Niagara. If the love of God ever sucks a man into its whirlpools it destroys him. It broke Jesus all to pieces.

From now on: weary he will sit by the well for the love of God that day has given him no rest; weary he will minister to others at the evening hour when his strength is gone, for the love of God will not permit a refusal to men and women in deep need; virtue will go out of him at the touch of disease for the love of God drives him into contact with all that is unwholesome for its healing. He will know hunger himself that he might have wherewith to feed the hungry; he will have no place to lay his head that others might pillow their heads on the bosom of the Father; he will have no reputation that the disreputable might have the good news preached to them; he will leave the ninety and nine righteous and go in darkness and in pain, in search of that which is lost. He will lay off his garments as teacher and wash the feet of lesser and unworthy men; he will gather children, hitherto driven away, as though small in size and small in worth necessarily go together, hand the keys of the Kingdom of God over to them, and build on them and such as them his Church. He will drink the cup that trembled in his hand, and still in his youth with his work but begun, go unto his second baptism —his baptism in the waters of death. "My cup and . . . my baptism"—these the love of God constraineth him to drink and enter. He will

lay his hand meekly upon the rough cross-piece of a Roman gallows—while miserable mercenaries hammer their iron nails through those gentle palms. He will remain silent while his own people jest at his loneliness and his agony.[1]

Why? What does it mean? It is the love of God seeking, searching, feeling out in this life, which has become its perfect channel, after other human life to lift it to the Father heart. The flood is poured through his life to irrigate human lives that surround and follow him. The love of God broke his heart in that despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"—the echo of the age-long cry of God. To the love of God, with his last remaining weakness, he commits his battered spirit.

Is there yoga in Jesus? The cross is the amazing answer. It is the very culmination and perfection of yoga. It is the last restraint humanly possible for body and mind and soul. It is self-imposed, for he gave himself without struggle and without stint; it is man-imposed, for it is written "they led him away to crucify him"; it is

[1] Of the silence of Jesus P. C. Mozoomdar writes, "Silence as a virtue, as the attribute of holy saints, was known in India before; but silence, kept under such conditions, as signalized the trial and death of Christ, has never been practised in our country, or anywhere else in the world. . . . Since then we too, who are so loud with our petty complaints, have learned to suffer in silence." *The Oriental Christ*, p. 182.

God-imposed, "the cup which the Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" It is the complete restraint in which God and man alike share. It is no cold and dispassionate yoga, however, for it burns with the fires of the yearnings of God. It has its place in the immensities. Stellar space, geological time, the immense lengthening of the vista of history have immeasurably dilated our conception of the greatness of God. "Surely the one unbelievable thing in these new conditions is that the love of God can be commonplace. We must dilate all our thoughts of the divine goodness, too. It must be on the same scale as God's wisdom and power. So the cross seems to me to be returning again, becoming more believable instead of less. It is the same thing in the sphere of character as the infinities of space and time." [1]

Hindu India stands reverently and sympathetically before the cross of Jesus, before his yoga-discipline and suffering. When Dr. Stanley Jones, in his meetings with these educated non-Christians in India, speaks upon the cross of Jesus, they are as moths about a lamp. Again and again I have seen Hindus enthusiastic with applause when Dr. Jones answers the Moslem who argues the impossibility of the suffering love of God. Said an Indian Christian of distinction

[1] D. S. Cairns in *British Weekly*, Nov. 11, 1926.

exultantly, "Christianity is bound to win India, for they have not the cross." Said a Hindu philosopher in one of the great modern universities, "The cross is your greatest power." When a recent Hindu paper would honor the Christ by a Christmas number, its editor chooses as his text, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." [1] Another Hindu writes:

"The time has come when this inexplicable mystery in the history of the human race of the occidental people accepting and oriental people remaining indifferent to the teachings of the greatest and noblest of oriental teachers should be solved and the stream of human history should be made to turn into its natural course. My countrymen should know and realize that the love that Jesus spoke of was never spoken of, was never conceived, by anybody before him,—that the Christian conception of love is quite different from the love conceived by any other founder of a faith, ancient or modern, in any part of the world." [2]

A little Hindu book lies on my table—a play on the life of Jesus written by an orthodox Hindu pundit in the center of Hinduism, Benares, and

[1] The *Morning Star*, Dec. 27, 1927, p. 90.
[2] A. P. Das in the *Indian Witness*, March 16, 1927, p. 164.

published by a Hindu publishing concern. On its cover is a crude picture in color of the crucifixion, as a Hindu artist conceives it to have been. Beneath the picture is a motto to the effect that suffering for truth's sake is stronger than brute force—but above the crucified Christ written in red letters are the words "Mahatma Isa," Mahatma Jesus—the greatest title India can bestow.

To the Hindu, the cross of Christ, when understood, can never be a "stumbling block" or "foolishness." That is reserved for formalists and "intellectuals," Hebrew, Greek or Modern. He can well understand and appreciate the hidden word of the Christian yoga; life through death. The binding is for freedom. The yoga is for *ānanda* (joy). The freedom of the "heavens rent asunder" comes with the slavery of that word "beloved." Love breaks not for the sake of brokenness, but for a new creation.

To Tertullian are attributed the words, "Credo quia absurdum est"—i.e., I believe in the Gospel because philosophically it is absurd; an antinomy, namely, resurrection through death. Yet is it so absurd?

Nature all about us speaks the same word: disintegration for reintegration into a higher form of life. There must be chaos before there

can be creation, death before there can be resurrection, pain before there can be new birth, the centrifugal before there can be the centripetal, the breathing out of the old before there can be the breathing in of fresh new vitality. God's world may be good, but God is after a better. And a better means the disintegration-reintegration process; it means suffering. The love of God, because it is love, breaks before it can remake. The cross is the love of God in supreme creative act and power. And he who would share in God's creative love must enter into suffering. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit." (John 12:24). There must be a daily dying to him who knows the love of God. The cross where pain and power meet, where "life joins issue with death," where the love of God in human pain is making a new and better world—is the true symbol of the Christian yoga.

The Hindu has long known that there is strange power engendered in suffering, as perfume within the folded petals of the rose. Study his long history of asceticism—his *tapas* and his *yoga*. By such suffering men come to power and enlightenment equal to the gods. That this power

should be redemptive *for others* is the new light that fascinates and dazzles him. Others have loved men and others have suffered—but no other has joined love and suffering as has the Christ.[1] The cross of Christ becomes unanswerable and overwhelming: suffering deliberately chosen because of its redemptive character, power engendered for the sake of others.

And the Hindu looks at us, at Western Christianity, to see the yoga of Jesus in us. (I know it is a hard word that I speak and there may easily be offence.) He sees the cross as a symbol upon our churches and our hymn- and prayer-books, upon our walls in crucifix or painting, or dangling lightly in gold from our watch-chains.

Or he sees the cross as a theological doctrine of Atonement. He does not understand—never having been trained in Roman law—how God's justice or the moral government of the universe

[1] As a Hindu puts it: "We are told that love is the basis of the religion of Sree Krishna and of Buddha in India. In his teaching of the Geeta Sree Krishna enjoins all to feel the same for friends and foe, but let it be observed that we must do so not because we must love our enemy, but because we must try to destroy all desires—desires of hatred as well as desires of love, in order to be above desire, to be desireless, which according to him is the means of salvation or rather annihilation of the self.

"Gautama Buddha preached love of our fellow men, of all men, and all living beings—even the humblest and the lowest—but a Buddhist does not love a being for love of him but for self in order that the self may be above suffering." A. P. Das in *Indian Witness*, March 16, 1927.

have become involved in all this self-giving and suffering of Jesus.

Or he hears us speak of the cross as a great experience of reconciliation with God. "So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.' Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks. Now, as he stood looking and weeping, behold three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with, 'Peace be to thee.' So the first said to him, 'Thy sins be forgiven;' the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third also set a mark upon his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate; so they went their way. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing:

'Thus far did I come loaden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither: what a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!'" [1]

The reality of this, the wonder of this, though strange to the Hindu, he would not deny. "But," he asks, "where is the suffering deliberately chosen as a daily method of life for the sake of the larger freedom that reaches far beyond one's self? It is not in the Roman Catholic service of the Mass where the suffering of Jesus has become encased, as it were, in magic. It is not in the Protestant service: I sing, I believe, I listen, I contribute, I shake hands, I depart, I forget."

In the light of their "Asiatic Christ," India is beginning to ask very pointedly of us of the West who name his name—"When are you ever weary and exhausted? When do you ever get beyond inconvenience and discomfort? When have you ever denied yourself and taken up the life of sacrifice? What do you know of losing your life? of coming not to be served but to serve?

[1] Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Chapter 6.

Where are the marks of the nails in your hands? When have you ever drunk his cup or been baptized with his baptism?"

When is the communion table a communion of redemptive suffering? "Every time," writes one whose heart throbs with the heart of India, "we see the sacred Bread broken and the sacred Wine outpoured and hear the words. 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' we know that we are called for love of Him to let our bodies be broken and our blood spilt; and every time that we receive that sacrificial food, we know that we are being endued with the power of sacrifice."[1] This is our privilege and bounden duty, and yet how often our "Go in peace" is the anæsthetic with which we deaden the poignancy of the cross and escape the "fellowship of his sufferings."

"Your Christianity is too comfortable, too easy-going. You have planed down the cross of Jesus and upholstered it. You of the West shrink from pain and loss. You fear poverty as the plague—yet of the yoga of Jesus it is written, 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.'

"You are too respectable. You have sent missionaries to our untouchables, but what of your own untouchables? When do you keep company

[1] J. C. Winslow, *Christian Yoga*, pp. 34, 35.

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with 'social inferiors,' and 'foreigners' and men of another race for the sake of the love of God?

"How can the love of God get a hold upon you, when your thoughts are occupied with wealth? 'You cannot serve God and money.'[1] You are the rich young Ruler—you keep the Commandments, but you miss the kingdom of God."

Again and again we heard it in India—"Gandhi has taught us the meaning of the cross. He has chosen deliberately the life of extreme denial and suffering that his people might live. We look on him, and we understand the cross of Christ. The cross is irresistible to us when it is shown us in a life."

And to confirm their words, I quote from a Hindu hymn-book. It was given to me by the son of Mahatma Gandhi when I shared the beautiful hospitality of their simple *āshram* (hermitage) at Sābarmati in Western India. The book is the hymnal of the *āshram* and is full of the gods, the ideas, and the ideals of Hinduism. Yet at the very end of this little book with its cover of coarse-woven khadi, so expressive of the

[1] Matthew 6:24 (Goodspeed's translation). Many Hindus are convinced that we have misunderstood Jesus' attitude toward wealth. As one of them puts it, "Christ was unequivocal in his condemnation of wealth. For the attainment of peace and blessedness in life and hereafter, the voluntary acceptance of poverty is a *sine qua non*."

spirit of the *āshram,* is a hymn in praise of the yoga of Jesus:

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the Cross of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His Blood.

See from His Head, His Hands, His Feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

To Christ, Who won for sinners grace
By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransomed race,
For ever and for evermore."

CHAPTER FOUR

JESUS, THE JIWANMUKTA

"Lifting up His eyes to heaven He said, Father"

ONE OF the great epics of the human race is India's search for God. Twenty-five centuries and more of amazing search! In a land of heat and wet and cold, of fever and malignant disease, of invasion and strife, of the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires—the search has gone on and still continues. From man to man they pass their secret phrases which unlock the mysteries of the infinite and divine. For centuries they carried their ponderous Scriptures in their memories, taxing memory to the breaking-point for the sake of the knowledge of God. Upon the leaves of the palm they inscribed with minute care, and now copy diligently to paper.

India is the everlasting pilgrim on the roads of the universe, seeking in open places and hidden corners the whereabouts of God. To run with patience this race India has cast aside freely every weight that does so easily beset us: lands and possessions, family, clothes, food, scholarship, speech, the company of men, even the world of phenomena itself as a garment of deception that

conceals reality. In every possible denial, in every possible excess, and in all between, India has searched. From the vile to the lofty, she has passed, asking ever, "Have you seen His footsteps? Has He passed this way?"

In the swamps of every conceivable sexual excess, in the low valleys of eating and drinking, and on the heights of spirit communing with spirit, India has carried on the search.

Sometimes the two levels are in strange proximity, as in certain of the "sacred" cities. Said the priest of what is probably the most obscene temple in all India, on which the lewd sportings of Sri Krishna are vividly depicted, "This [pointing to the carvings] is one of the roads to God. All roads that lead to God are good, and there is no difference between them." [1]

On the same east coast is an *āshram* (hermitage) of great simplicity and quiet beauty. "This," said our competent Indian friend, an outstanding Christian, "is genuine and spiritual. The Mahant, or head of the *āshram,* an ex-headmaster of

[1] Of this same temple my note-book records, "Children play about it. Fortunately it is falling into decay. It was built by a Raja, seventy years ago. His son has built an orphanage and a college and refuses to keep the temple in repair. It is Hinduism at its worst. 'It causes joy to the beholder' said the temple-priest, 'because Krishna gave joy to so many women all at once.' At the close he added, 'My son is studying in a mission school.' Thus do the sons differ from their fathers."

a Government High School, told us of how the founder had discovered a name of God which had power, and had passed it on to disciples, who were forbidden, however, to pass it on in turn. Only one had disobeyed—he had sold the name for a consideration and become wealthy, and therefore, according to the threat of the founder had "fallen." "The name is secret," the Mahant, gentle of face and manner, continued, "and I cannot tell you of my spiritual experiences."

What reverence India has for those who search! Rascals and frauds they may be, these so-called "holy men," these "religious hoboes," who wander seemingly so aimlessly on the roads of India, but India feeds them by the million—so great is her reverence for the search.[1] The tragedy and the pathos of it are overwhelming! One marvels at the price India is willing to pay for some word of God, some "Thus saith the Lord." Men put into their begging-bowls, till the old lust for the things of the flesh returns. Fathers and mothers give their sons freely to these half-crazed mendicants. In talking with

[1] Prof. Govinda Das of the Central Hindu University, Benares, describes them: "The sex aberrations of modern celibate orders are not hidden from any but the 'faithful.' It is only 'inverts' and 'perverts' that hold the low opinion about women, so fashionable among the professional Yogis and Vedantis. These people are the enemies of all true civilization and progress." (*Hinduism*, p. 300)

these "sadhus" in their own vernacular, when they open the doors of memory, closed to a total stranger, I was surprised to discover how many had started as boys. As naturally as the lad of England goes to sea, so the lad of India takes to the religious quest.

And what of those who find? India worships these. Disciples swarm about such, as about a mother bee. They lavish titles upon them: Mahatma, Paramahamsa, and the like. They worship them living, and set up their images or photographs for continued worship, when dead. Men take the dust of their feet as they sit or as they walk, to rub it on their bowed foreheads, and sit open-mouthed to listen, as though the ears did not furnish sufficient channels for the inrush of truth. So thirsty is the soul of India! India panteth after God even "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks."

One who has found—in this life—is a *jiwan* (or *jivan*) *mukta,* from *jiwan,* meaning life, and *mukti,* meaning salvation or release. To realize in this life is the goal of all searching that is serious.

In three ways India bears record that searching after God, she has found Him. Why should we doubt her sincerity? Has God left Himself with-

out witness in any land or among any people? "At sundry times and in divers manners" He has spoken in India as well as in Canaan or Palestine. He who would find God, says the Hindu, may find Him in one of three manners:

First, in an Immanence that is impersonal, because it is absolute. This is the message of the Upanishads: God in the self of man, because God alone is universality; God is the self of man, because God alone is totality; there is no self of man, because God alone is reality.

All distinction is unreal. He is "Ekam evadvityam"—"the One without a second." Where Mohammed denounces "adding gods to God," the sin of polytheism, the Upanishads denounce adding anything to God. For there is nothing but God:

"Thou art woman. Thou art man.
Thou art the youth and the maiden too.
Thou as an old man totterest with a staff.
Being born, thou becomest facing in every direction.
Thou art the dark-blue bird and the green [parrot] with red eyes.
Thou hast the lightning as thy child. Thou art the seasons and the seas.

Having no beginning, thou dost abide with all-pervadingness,
Wherefrom all beings are born." [1]

He is the unspeakable and the incomprehensible. To every description the human intelligence or imagination might give of God, there is a sharp interruption: "Not that," "not that" (*neti, neti*).

"Not above, not across,
Not in the middle has one grasped Him.
There is no likeness of Him." [2]

"Not by speech, not by mind,
Not by sight can He be apprehended.
How can He be comprehended
Otherwise than by one's saying 'He is!' " [3]

Or again:

"It is conceived of by him by whom It is not conceived of.
He by whom It is conceived of, knows It not.
It is not understood by those who understand It.

[1] *Svetasvatara Upanishad* 4:2–4 (Hume's translation).
[2] *Svetasvatara Upanishad* 4:19 (do.).
[3] *Katha Upanishad* 6:12 (do.).

It is understood by those who understand It not." [1]

Yet this is the gospel of the Upanishads: there is an escape from this seeming world, the world of pain and defeat and endless rebirth, into the world unchanging and real, into the "Brahma-world."

"If a person knew the Soul (Atman)
With the thought 'I am he!'
With what desire, for love of what
Would he cling unto the body?"

"He who has found and has awakened to the Soul . . .
The world is his; indeed he is the world itself." [2]

"From the unreal lead me to the real,
From darkness lead me to light,
From death lead me to immortality." [3]

The Brahma-world of bliss is the "world of dreamless sleep from which there is no awakening."

[1] *Kena Upanishad*, 11 (do.).
[2] *Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad*, 4:4, 12, 13 (do.).
[3] *Ibid.*, 1:3, 28 (do.).

"As a falcon, or an eagle, having flown around here in space, becomes weary, folds its wings, and is borne down to its nest, just so this person hastens to that state, where, asleep, he desires no desires and sees no dream." [1]

To us of the West, it is annihilation. To them it is liberation, the emphasis on the positive and not the negative. This is Vedanta—the end of knowledge—to know that all is seeming, illusion, hallucination, but God—and through the trap-door of that realization, possible in this life, one climbs and escapes from the limited to the limitless, from the unreal self of space and time and individuality, to the real Self that knows no space or time or individuality or selfhood. The tiny drop has found the infinite Ocean without shores and without bottom, there gladly to surrender forever its pitiful drop-hood.

"These rivers, my dear, flow, the eastern toward the east, the western toward the west. They go just from the ocean to the ocean. They become the ocean itself. As there they know not, 'I am this one,' 'I am that one'—even so, indeed, my dear, all creatures here, though they have come forth from Being, know not 'We have come forth from Being.'" [2]

[1] *Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad*, 4:3, 19 (do.).
[2] *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6:10, 1 (do.).

Of this strange finding, these men of India have sung rich songs. This is jiwanmukti par excellence.

But this is a hard and a cheerless finding to those that have any regard for the joys and sorrows of our human life. So India seeks God along an easier way. And India finds—in the Bhagavadgita or "The Gita" as it is generally styled. This little book is often called "the New Testament of Hinduism." How India loves the Gita! "We are brought up on the Gita," said my painter friend. "Now I have mastered the Gita I am prepared to study other religions. Nothing can shake me now"—and Headmaster B—— S—— B. A. looked earnestly into my eyes.

In the Gita, India finds God in an immanence that has a personal face. The transcendental appears—a phase of the immanent. Distinction is partially real. It is the divine taking human form that speaks in Krishna:

"Manifold the renewals of my birth
Have been, Arjuna! and of thy births too!
But mine I know, and thine thou knowest not,
O Slayer of thy Foes! Albeit I be
Unborn, undying, indestructible,
The Lord of all things living; not the less—

By Maya, by my magic which I stamp
On floating Nature-forms, the primal vast—
I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata! when Wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succoring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again.
Who knows the truth touching my births on earth
And my divine work, when he quits the flesh
Puts on its load no more, falls no more down
To earthly birth: to Me he comes, dear Prince." [1]

Oh the joy of that personal in the impersonal! India exults in it and warms her heart.

"In Him seek refuge with thy whole soul . . . by His grace thou shalt win supreme peace, the everlasting realm. . . . Hear again My supreme word, deepest of all; for that thou art exceedingly beloved of Me, therefore I will say what is for thy weal. Have thy mind on Me, thy sacrifice to Me, do homage to Me. To Me shalt thou come. I make thee a truthful promise; thou art dear to Me. Surrendering all the Laws, come for

[1] *The Gita*, translated by Sir Edwin Arnold (The Song Celestial), p. 23 f. (London: Kegan Paul. 1925)

refuge to Me alone, I will deliver thee from all sins; grieve not." [1]

In such words, coming from the mouth of God, the burning heart of India forgets the inconsistencies and the harsh passages of the Gita in the joy of this: that out of the divine there is framed a face.

And now the third way of finding the Divine in this life opens up. Having once caught a partial vision of a face in the Absolute, the yearning soul of India will have nothing less than a personal God of grace whose immanence is recognized but not stressed. Devotion (bhakti) is preferred to knowledge, and song to argument. India momentarily forgets the background in the glory of the foreground. Salvation becomes communion and not absorption:

"So dear the path of *bhakti,*
They despise the great release."

"Hear, O God, my supplication,—
Do not grant me Liberation.
'Tis what men so much desire;
Yet how much this joy is higher! . . .

[1] *The Gita*, translated by Lionel D. Barnett (The Lord's Song), p. 173. (London Dent. 1905)

Heavenly joy is not for me,
For it passeth speedily;
But that name how strangely dear
That in songs of praise we hear." [1]

Distinction is now practically real. God is transcendent as far as my experience is concerned —who will leave me enough of individuality to know the joy of eternally sitting at His feet in the rapture of worship and contemplation.

In the rich *bhakti* literature all else is vanity and unreality but the singer's devotion to God, the God of grace. Where one chants the Upanishads, and a dozen chant the Gita, a hundred will sing the bhakti songs in their expressive vernaculars and with their haunting, soulful tunes. Quaintly, the poet weaves his name into the rhyme and rhythm, vouching thereby not only for the authorship but for the reality of the devotion and of the finding:

"Where at the last shall my mind find rest?
The fool who leaves the protection of Rama
To run after other gods,
Is as the silly bird who leaves the ship
To find a ship:

[1] Nicol Macnicol, *Psalms of the Maratha Saints*, pp. 35, 83 f. (Oxford University Press. 1919)

Is as the block-head who thirsty leaves the waters
of Ganga (Ganges)
To dig himself a well.
The bee that has tasted the honey of the lotus—
Why should it drink the juice of the thorny
kareel?
Sur Das [asks], who that has once had the Lord
as milch-cow for his desire,
Will leave Him to milk a goat." [1]

"Who but the Lord could have cured my pain?
Filthy and vile I remained age upon age,
Till picking over mustard seed, I came upon a
diamond;
Finding the diamond I could no more be patient,
But carrying it set out, seeking one could test it.
All the Sadhus have tested out my diamond;
From that day my rested soul knows joy." [2]

"The Alone Wealthy is my wealth.
The wealth of some is gold and silver; of others
elephants and horses.
The wealth of some is rubies and pearls; the
Alone Wealthy is my wealth.
The king cannot seize it, nor the fire burn it;

[1] From the Hindi of Sur Das (16th Century). The reference is to the famous milch-cow produced at the churning of the milk sea, which had the power of granting wishes.

[2] From the Hindi of Dharm Das (16th Century).

Whoever finds it cannot steal it.
Spending it does not lessen it.
One cannot leave it behind on the steps of the bathing-ghat.
It is folly to bury it in a box or in the earth,
Or to put it away wrapped again and again in cloths.
I do not keep it hidden even for a moment
Whether it be evening or day, night or dawn.
When my soul, taking its wealth, would go and sell it,
It traverses the three markets in vain.
There is nothing equal to it in value, and those who can buy it are few indeed.
This wealth by which so many have become rich—ten millions of Hindus and Turks—
Came to this Dharni so easily, by the favour of my Satguru."[1]

"He who is the repose of his worshippers, he stands and cries to us to hasten. With fond interest he takes and puts morsels of love in my mouth. He fastens us to his waist-cloth and takes us quickly over the stream of the world. Greatly he desires his worshippers, and looks around in every quarter for them. Tuka says, He is a sea

[1] From the Hindi of Dharni Das (18th Century).

of mercy, he satisfies abundantly the desire of all." [1]

India's problem then is to find God in this life, whether as impersonal, or as impersonal with a personal face, or as personal within a vague impersonality.

While there are distinct notes in Hinduism of religious satisfaction here and now, yet in general the finding is put in the future. In the Upanishads, the Brahma-world lies beyond; in the Gita, union lies beyond—"he will come to me"; in the *bhakti* songs, joy lies beyond, at the feet of the Imperishable. In all this literature it is rather a hope than an attainment, an anticipation rather than a consummation. Jiwanmukti is most difficult of attainment—the overwhelming sense of the reality and presence of God is rare.

So also in India today attainment is hard to find. The hope and expectation are still there in spite of the rising tide of economic change, but it is difficult to discover even religious men in Hinduism who can speak with conviction and assurance in the realm of personal experience. Said a scholarly pundit to me, "We are far stronger in the theory of Vedanta than in its practice. Thirty years ago there were several men at Benares and

[1] *Poems of Tuka Ram.* English Edition No. 315. Translated from the Marathi by Fraser and Marathe.

Hurdwar who could claim to have 'realized,' but I do not know of a single one today in either city." Seated in a railway train, in a third class compartment filled with Indians, a young singer entered. "What shall I sing?" he asked with eagerness. "Sing us a song of the love of God," was the instant reply of his fellow-passengers. Out of the *bhakti* songs he sang, till a Hindu interrupted: "Enough! You know not what you sing. Sing us of the knowledge of God." The singer gave himself more earnestly than before. When he had finished they turned to me, "Poor fellow, he only sings. He knows nothing. Only one out of a hundred such knows what he sings; but in our fathers' time ten out of a hundred knew." Under the shadow of two names many Hindus today are resting and both of them are dead.[1] "These realized in this life, in recent years," they say, "and it is entirely possible for us to do so also, when we have paid the price."

Did Jesus find God in this life? Has he any answer to India's search? What did he "realize" and how? Unless he was vital with the sense of the Infinite, India will esteem him not.

Was there ever another so God-conscious as Jesus? Of that great turning in his life—his

[1] Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1834–1886) and Swami Ram Tirath (1873–1907).

"conversion"—when he turned not from sin and self-love, but from the quiet of the village life in Galilee—two significant facts are recorded. First, the voice that came out of the heavens: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." That day the echoing answer returned into the open heavens, "Thou art my beloved Father, in thee I am well pleased." Jesus had "realized." Henceforth "My Father" is the very core of his life and the heart of his teaching. Never is there a shadow cast by any cruel testing upon the fullness of that realization here and now. Gethsemane and Calvary but bring it to an intenser focus: "My Father, if it be possible," "Father, forgive them," "My God, My God," "Father, into thy hands."

And second, "he saw the heavens rent asunder." The Kingdom of Heaven was let through to the earth. There was no longer a dividing frontier —"as in heaven so on earth." Mortality, to him, was covered with Immortality; Eternity had entered into Time. Henceforth he was "dominated and liberated by an enthusiasm for God."

Jesus knew God as transcendent and personal. He was in the line of the Old Testament saints and seers, who after this manner had apprehended God. His threefold response was *bhakti,* the utter devotion of love; it was *karma:* "I must

work the works of him that sent me"; it was *jnana,* not in the thoroughgoing sense of the pantheistic Vedanta, where knowledge is swallowed up in knowledge, where one becomes "a thinker without a thought," but an equally emancipating knowledge: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," . . . "we worship that which we do know."

His response to the transcendent Fatherhood was emotional: great words of flame sat on his lips, "Father . . . kingdom . . . power . . . glory"; it was spiritual: "who art in Heaven . . . as in heaven"; it was moral: "hallowed . . . forgive . . . lead us not into temptation . . . deliver us from evil"; it was practical: "thy will be done . . . this day . . . our daily bread"; it was individual—a personal experience; it was social: "our Father . . . our bread . . . our debts . . . our debtors."

"Sing us a song of the love of God"—and he sings, as any *bhakta* poet, of the lost sheep and the lost Son.

"Sing us a song of the knowledge of God"—and he sings, climbing by the rungs of the self of man to the Self of God—from atman to Atman —"If ye then being evil know . . . how much more shall your heavenly Father."

His sense of God was the one thing they could

not take from him. Stripped of all else—nation, family, disciples, raiment, health—this one thing remained: *Eloi,* my God. This was his last citadel and into it he entered, and found it impregnable. "Truly," said the rough centurion, looking up at that strange figure, "this was a son of God."

Did Jesus know God as immanent? Hindu India reads and insists he did, and will insist. She uses John's gospel as her text.[1] Up and down India we found it so. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," "I am in the Father and the Father in me," were constantly quoted to us in support of their contention. They go further and even couple the old Vedanta on to the teachings of Jesus, or vice versa, and the coupling-pin is the verse, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). His deeper esoteric teaching, they say, was Vedantic. In these words, Jesus made the greater surrender, greater than that of Calvary;

[1] It was Bishop Westcott who said that we should never fully understand St. John's Gospel until India was Christian. Indeed he would be a bold man who would dare to measure the debt which the West may some day owe to India—the new understanding of our faith, the new vision of our Master, the new quickening of the Church's vital forces which may come to us of the old Christendom, when the profound mystical intuition of India, hampered in part as it has been by an enervating monism against which its own best spirits have rebelled, is liberated into full and healthful activity by the discovery of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." J. C. Winslow, *Christian Yoga*, p. 4.

he surrendered personality itself which is "the organ of pain."

God in human life—human life in God: of these the Gospels are full. India would push it still further: God is human life—human life is God. And here Christ is central. God comes to His own realization in Christ. A man, therefore, who is "in union with Christ" slowly settles into the all-pervasive, immanent God, is transfused and suffused with God, takes on the very nature of God.

Are there discoveries that yet await us as we explore the Christ along these lines? India is sure there are. This is partially what they have in mind when they say, "we shall interpret him." This is what the Arya Samajist leader had in mind when he said, "The teaching of Hinduism and the teaching of Jesus are not far apart. It is a matter of method."

An Indian Christian senses the meanings and possibilities of such immanence: "It must be recognized that God is already immanent in the soul and that yet man has to endeavour to make this immanence a fuller and richer spiritual experience. . . . God is in men energizing them and illumining them. He is their life as well as their light. All of their capacities—physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual—are given by Him.

He not merely gives them these capacities but abides always in them flooding them in light, so that they may make the best use of these capacities by relating them steadily and effectively toward Himself." It is in Christ, in whom "this Light chose to shine fully and with all its glory and effulgence through a perfect medium," that we are enabled to perfect these capacities. "Always will the immanent Christ, by whose life as a historical figure we are already captivated, energise in the depths of our souls pouring into us floods of light. In the blaze of His divine glory we shall see all things in their true perspective. Such radiance will invest the whole of life with undimmed clearness and reveal it as it is. And such constant revelation will take place with the intimacy and warmth of personal love."[1] Thus does India go back to John's Gospel for the study of Jesus as "jiwanmukta."

The third phase of Jesus' finding of God in this life is that finding he remains amid and a part of all human activity. This is new in India. The ideal of the Upanishads is withdrawal from the world: the forest anchorite or the homeless wanderer. The Gita and the *Bhakti* poets bid men stay in the world but withdraw their interest from the world. But Jesus goes farther—he com-

[1] A. J. Appasamy, *Christianity as Bhakti Marga*, pp. 49, 55 f., 229 f. (London: MacMillan. 1927)

bines God-intoxication with the service of the community. The two are woven together in an amazing pattern and with consummate skill. The intensity of the one carries to the other; and the needs of the other return him to the one. The mountain sends him to the valley, and the valley sends him to the mountain. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" with four-fold intensity drives him with like intensity ("and the second is like unto it") to the love of neighbor who is, for him, determined not by propinquity but by compassion. He empties his God-passion into human need. His hand catches the rhythm of his heart. So deeply were the two in unison that when they nailed the one they broke the other.

This is capturing the imagination of thinking men among the non-Christians of India. Hinduism has despised the world, but now Indians would love their country. They look to the old religions to find a religious basis for nationalism and patriotism. Says one voice (the Arya Samaj): back to the Four Vedas with their world-attachments. Says another (Vivekananda and the Theosophists): Community service because every man is God. "Let God assist God; let God bind up His own wounds, and carry Himself to the inn." Says another, "Let us have done with religion altogether. It is divisive and keeps us

from *swaraj*" or "Let service of country be our one and common religion."

But all these wrench the ancient systems and do not come naturally. Here in Jesus, however, are mysticism and nationalism perfectly combined.

"Tell us of the practical Christ," was the request of the leader of the Radha Swami Satsang sect, worshipped as an incarnation of the Divine by his followers, when he invited Dr. Stanley Jones to speak to his interesting community. He would hear how the Christ poured his great finding of God not merely into song and parable but into great practical service.

From God to man the shuttle of his weaving shoots back and forth with the golden thread of love. India of today likes the pattern. A better world is in the making. I have seen Hindu audiences again and again applaud when we were speaking on Jesus' conception of a perfect human society and how to achieve it. "We do not delete one word of what you have said" said an old Hindu in a conservative center. They like the "commonwealth" of man and God in Christ.

Right here they are very frank with us of the West—those of them that know us. They do not like our weaving—our pattern of a better world as seen in our interpretation and execution of the mind of Jesus. It is not merely our ecclesiastical

organizations nor our doctrinal statements. These are, it is true, foreign and strange to them, but India has always been tolerant in matters of cult and belief; otherwise she would have torn herself to pieces centuries ago. It is not merely that the thread of love breaks in our fingers when "neighbor" means men and women of other races and nations and social levels. They can understand how this could happen, having their own similar problem with men of other faiths and other castes. The fault is far more serious than these.

Why is not India Christian after all our efforts? Six times have we tramped about this Jericho with our preaching, our schools, our hospitals, our literature, our philanthropy and our social reform. Have we not sacrificed and spent and toiled? No generation has ever given itself as our generation. There are no finer missionaries than those in India. And yet they say, "Christ"—but not "Christianity." They give us credit for our vast and manifold efforts, but they come no further. Instead they attempt to match our preaching with their preaching, using texts out of their own sacred books, our schools with their schools, our medical and philanthropic institutions with theirs, our literature with their literature (witness the book-stalls of Indian towns and cities, filled with

recent books of a politico-religious nature), our propaganda for social reform with theirs. On the surface it seems an impasse. Jericho does not tumble, waiting for some seventh circuit with its conquering shout.

Where lies the fault? Because we of the West, claiming to represent the Christ, have broken down where Jesus was strongest, where Jesus was irresistible—in *jiwanmukti,* in the vitality of his sense of God. Our shuttle does not go full length on the one side, and we weave but half a pattern. We are doing community service without God-intoxication. We have reversed the Commandments: first and foremost thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (the Golden Rule), and the second is like unto it: thou shalt love the Lord thy God—if thou canst. We are trying to love our neighbor without the four-ply love of God to give it significance and passion. We are children of the valley and know little of the power that is gathered upon the mountain. Worship is formal and aesthetic but not creative. We go to the work of the day without the prayer of the dawn. We are brothers of men, but not sons of God. We have explored the "cup of cold water," but not the "in the name of a disciple." We know little of the "well of water springing up unto

eternal life," from which the cups of cold water should be drawn.

We have come ministering, having read the parable of the Good Samaritan for our technique. But in this parable Jesus teaches whom to serve, not how to serve. We have never read, or never comprehended, Jesus' technique of service: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God and goeth unto God . . . took a towel and girded himself" (John 13:3, 4). The towel and the basin of water were shot through with the eternal and the universal. It was no ordinary washing; it became a sacrament.

We have come as Martha, not as Mary rising to serve. And India rebukes Martha even as Jesus did.

We have thought that we were builders of the Kingdom, and we rush about with this tool and that. "We still believe mainly in fuss and noise and crowding and organization and machinery. If things drag, we evolve some other type of meeting, add one more to the already deafening intricacy of whirling wheels. And when it too is whirling with the rest we feel more happy. There may be no spiritual outcome whatsoever, but we are pleasantly tired, and there is a wind blowing in our faces and so we have the

sense something is being done. So long as we are hot and perspiring, are talking and meeting, are bustled and rushed, we feel that things are happening, for we trust in efficiency and busyness, and a certain material capacity far more than in the Holy Ghost; energy and organization, that we feel is what will bring us through."[1] By boosting and boasting we have thought to bring in the Kingdom of God.

But to Jesus, the Kingdom of God comes not in this way. It comes not by man's efforts—it is received as God's gift.[2] It comes from above; it is not built from below. "Our Father who art in heaven . . . thy Kingdom come." "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It is as the treasure that is stumbled on; as the corn that grows silently from the blade to the

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, p. 76. (Edinburgh. T. & T. Clark. 1926)

[2] "The Kingdom as he knew it, was God's, and men could no more establish it than they could make the sun rise in heaven. His attitude was always that of waiting upon God, of trust in a divine power and wisdom which are working on our behalf and will accomplish for us what we cannot do ourselves. . . . This did not mean that men were to stand by passively until God fulfilled his promise, but that they could count on God." (E. F. Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 48, 50. Macmillan. 1924). "In reality, however, Jesus does not speak of the Kingdom of God as of something that comes into existence . . . through a development of human society, but as of something that is brought about by God. . . . In his thought the ethical activity of man is only like a powerful prayer to God, that he may cause the Kingdom to appear without delay." Reprinted from *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, by A. Schweitzer, copyright, 1923, by G. H. Doran Company.

full grain in the ear. It comes into our lives in creative worship, and then it leaps from our fingers as we touch the day's task and human need. It is given us in the secret "inner closet," or as we lift our eyes to heaven before breaking "our daily bread," or as we enter some Jordan of commitment of life to God's purposes, or at the dawn on some mountain-slope, or when above the "lilies of the field" we "draw a deeper breath of God."

And his last word of instruction to his disciples —those who learned from him—soon to be apostles—those who were sent from him—was this: that before they attempted any mission in Jerusalem or in an uttermost part of the earth, they should tarry in a secret and simple upper room until they were "clothed with power from on high," until they had received "the promise of the Father." Then should their witness be with overwhelming compulsion; then were they to touch the cripples that sit at the gate of every temple.

India knows when preaching is more than preaching. Said a big Theosophist to Dr. Stanley Jones, "Only truth can shake me as you have shaken me tonight." India knows when teaching is more than teaching, and social service is more than social service. It is when one comes with the

SCHOOL OF THEOLO

irresistible ministry of Jesus, running the shuttle of the divine across all the threads of human life. This is the pattern unique. This is the glory of Christianity, whose center and whose crown is Jesus the *jiwanmukta*.

One morning I sat in a little conference of Indian Christian clergy of the Madras Presidency. A well-known Hindu, one of the outstanding men in politics and journalism in that important Presidency, honored by the Government of India with the title of Rao Bahadur, was our guest. Hindu he was, and yet not Hindu, for he was an ardent follower of Christ. He belonged to that small group of men, one of whom styled the group, "unauthorized Christians." For reasons of their own they refuse baptism and membership in a Christian church. Our guest had told me of how he was won to Christ: it was the life of a professor in the Madras Christian College, noted not only for his fine scholarship and his ability as a teacher, but for the creative worship in his life. "He walked through our school as the Pied Piper of Hamelin, drawing the hearts of the boys after him and to his Lord. I became," he went on, "an open disciple of Jesus in my community."

Seated on the floor beside me, he rose to his feet to speak. The words he spoke that day were

to our souls as the rain that breaks the pitiless, parched summer, the earnest of harvests that are to be. It was India herself speaking to us that morning with impassioned dignity, out of her long search of the ages for some sure knowledge of God, with her eyes at last resting upon the Christ:

"India has had her long religious search." He leaned over and picked up my New Testament and opened to the Book of Acts. "'From one forefather he has created every nation of mankind and made them live all over the face of the earth, fixing their appointed times and the limits of their lands, so that they might search for God, and perhaps grope for him and find him, though He is never far from any of us.'[1]

"What India has lacked has been a response from behind the veil. That has come to us in Christ. We have been addressing ourselves to an eternal muteness. We have received no answer. Here comes Christianity in Christ with a speaking God—a God that speaks at last.

"Christ is a handshake between God and man. Man has been putting forth his feeble hand, eagerly seeking in the dark for God. Now in Christ God takes hold of it. In the hearty handshake, heart speaks to heart.

[1] Acts 17:26, 27 (Goodspeed's translation).

"Rembrandt has a picture of darkness and in the darkness a few lines appear, showing us the face of God. That face has compassion and suffering—for you and me. That face is seen in Christ."

CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS AND ĀNANDA

"Preaching the good tidings . . .
Blessed . . . Blessed . . . Blessed"

A GREAT word in India is the word *ānanda*. It is usually translated bliss; it really means joy—joy unutterable and overwhelming.

India knows what the human heart desires more than all else. India knows what men and women are seeking after in the midst of life's toil and life's amenities. The universal search is for happiness. Happiness is the star by which we chart our course and turn our rudder. For happiness are we made, and we are not content till we come on the playing fountains of happiness and drink of their streams. This is the living water.

So we search for joy in material things. Men seek wealth, for wealth brings joy; power, for power brings joy; pleasure, for pleasure brings joy.

So we search after God for the joy that there is in God. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" is the end of the road for the great religions of the world. The enjoyment of God is the *summum bonum* of all religious aspiration and endeavor.

India well knows that human joy is deceptive and soon exhausted; in God are the inexhaustible treasures of ānanda if there are such anywhere. This is the great theme of all Indian music and scripture.

"Have thy love for the Lord, O Soul; have for the Lord thy love.
A time such as this will never come again—
Your chance will soon be gone.
Having looked on the graceful human form, forget!
It is but a wall of sand.
Joy and wealth are words spoken in a dream,
As frost upon the grass.
The deeds which find the feet of the Supreme; do but those deeds, dear friend." [1]

India has remembered what we have too soon forgotten: that only a message of joy can catch the hearing and the hearts of men. To that which is less than joy, men pay no heed. He alone who has good tidings on his lips will men hear gladly, whether it be in the Ganges valley or on the hills of Galilee.

Three times has India been stirred by "good tidings of great joy," "tidings of salvation and

[1] From the Hindi of Kabír (died 1518).

release" from the sorrows that chain us in this life.

The first is the Brahma-Atman Gospel of the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ—the Gospel contained in the Upanishads. These ancient books speak much of *ānanda* and catch up for all time the joy of the finding of the Real in this world of the unreal.

It is "the highest, indescribable happiness";[1] it is "imperishable, immeasurable happiness."[2]

"The Taittiriya Upanishad, where by arithmetical computation that perfect bliss is declared equal to octillion blisses of the most favored man on earth, states in closing that the aspirant, having reached the 'self which consists of bliss,' goes up and down these worlds, eating what he will and assuming what forms he will, and sits singing the song of universal unity which begins with 'Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful! Oh, wonderful!' "[3]

"Friend, your face shines like that of one who knows Brahma."[4]

"That happiness which belongs to a mind which by deep meditation has been washed clean from all impurity and has entered within the Self cannot be described by words."[5]

[1] *Katha Upanishad* 5:14 (Hume's translation).
[2] *Maitri Upanishad* 6:30 (do.).
[3] R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 47. (Oxford University Press. 1921.)
[4] *Chandogya Upanishad* 4. 14. 2.
[5] *Maitri Upanishad* 6.34

"The bliss of Brahma he who knows,
Fears not from anything at all." [1]

Of the joy of the Brahma-world, the poet sings: "Over that bridge there cross neither day, nor night, nor old age, nor death, nor sorrow, nor well-doing, nor evil-doing. All evils turn back therefrom, for that Brahma-world is freed from evil. Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, if one is blind, he becomes no longer blind; if he is sick, he becomes no longer sick. Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, the night appears even as the day, for that Brahma-world is ever illumined." [2]

When they come to ascribe qualities to Brahma, they used three words in ascending order: He is *sat,* that is reality; He is *chit,* that is intelligence; He is *ānanda,* that is joy. Before God slips out of human fingers into vacuity, from the personal into the impersonal, His last garment that He leaves in our hands—the nearest we can get to Him in human words—is Ānanda.

God is Holiness, says Judaism; God is Power, says Islam; God is Love, says Christianity; God is Joy, says Hinduism.[3]

[1] *Taittiriya Upanishad* 2.9 (Hume's translation).

[2] *Chandogya Upanishad,* 8.4.1,2 (do.).

[3] "India conceived the Dance of Shiva—Shiva, with the Sun and Moon as eyes and the Ganges spurting from his helm, dancing

And those who expound the Vedanta (the systematized Brahma-Atman Gospel) in our day—these Swamis who strangely unite pantheism and social service—have taken unto themselves new names: Vivek-ānanda, Brahm-ānanda, Parm-ānanda, Abhed-ānanda, Swarup-ānanda. Joy, joy, joy, joy, joy written into their very names.

The second great gospel is that of early Buddhism, which is a religion of India. "Sorrow and the uprooting of sorrow"—to preach these Gautama, the founder, came. The obverse is gloom, the reverse joy. I stood recently at the spot of enlightenment (at Bodh-gaya) where the fountain began to play in Gautama. Again and again I returned to it, thinking of the enormous significance for Asia of what took place in the religious experience of one man some twenty-five centuries ago. From this spot swept the great stream of joy and hope and culture that did not stop till it had reached the confines of eastern and southern Asia.

He came proclaiming the joy of freedom by the noble, eightfold path that lies midway between sensual indulgence and extreme asceticism, by the mild discipline of thought and conduct. He came with the joy of *nirvana* (nibbana)—the blowing

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exultant in the flames; the Universe is the expression of Zest.' B. H. Streeter, *Reality*, p. 174. (Macmillan. 1926)

out of desire, and of consequent rebirth, and of consequent sorrow. Is there significance in the fact that his favorite disciple was Ānanda?

The early Buddhists sang of their joy:

"There on the mountain, where no crowd can come,
Shalt find thy joy, O heart, for never doubt
But thou shalt surely win to the Beyond." [1]

"War to the knife with thee, O lust, we've waged.
Now are we quit and free of debt to thee.
Now fare we onward to that Going-out (nibbana)
Where at our journey's end we weep no more." [2]

"Now let the *bhikkhu* with exceeding joy
Delighting in the Buddha's Way and Lore,
Go up on to the holy, happy Path
Where things component ne'er excite him more." [3]

Or hear a woman singing:

"Buddha's daugter I,
Born of his mouth, his blessed word, I stand,
Transported with nibbana's bliss alway.
And all the sense-desires that fetter gods,
That hinder men, are wholly riven off.

[1] *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, "The Brethren" (Therāgathā), verse 1144. Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.
[2] *Ibid.*, v. 138. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 350.

Abolished is the infinite round of births.
Becoming cometh ne'er again for me." [1]

"For seven days I sat in Jhana-joy
And ease, cross-legged; on the eighth day at last
I stretched my limbs, and went my way serene,
For I had burst asunder the surrounding gloom." [2]

And the third gospel of joy that swept India was that of the great "Bhakti Revival" whose crest came in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries —a time of great political confusion. The Mohammedan conquests were on and great changes were taking place. "Buddhism seems to have disappeared almost altogether under the shock and Hinduism suffered most severely also. . . . Indeed it would not be too much to say that the crushing of the Hinduism of the temple and the scholar led to the outbursting of a simpler and more helpful faith from the heart of the people itself." [3]

The great name is Ramananda—the joy of Rama (15th century). This great revival of bhakti—salvation by devoted allegiance to a personal God of grace—came out of the South, but

[1] *Psalms of the Sisters* (Therigāthā), vv. 45–47. Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

[2] *Ibid.*, vv. 43, 44.

[3] J. N. Farquhar, *Primer of Hinduism* (Second Edition), p. 132 f. (Oxford University Press. 1912)

"it was Ramananda who made it the leading religion of India." And the message of Ramananda was joy.

Of Ramananda and his work it is written: "Then arose Ramananda and within half a century Bhagavatism (i.e. the religion of bhakti) became the leading religion of India. . . . It now became as fully the right of the despised classes, of Musulmans, and of unclean leather workers. From Ramananda's time it was to the poor that the Gospel was preached and that in their own language. . . . We find ourselves in the face of the greatest religious revolution that India has ever seen—greater even than that of Buddhism, for its effects have persisted to the present day. Religion is no longer a question of knowledge. It is one of emotion. We visit a land of mysticism and rapture, and meet spirits akin, not to the giant schoolmen of Benares, but to the poets and mystics of mediæval Europe. In the early years of the reform the converts lived and moved in an atmosphere of the highest spiritual exaltation, while over all there hovered with healing in its wings a Divine gospel of love. . . . Rich noblemen abandoned all their possessions and gave them to the poor, and even the poorest would lay aside a bundle of sticks to light a fire for some chance wandering saint. Nor were these converts

confined to the male sex. Of devout and honorable women there were not a few—Mira Bai, the queen-poet of Udaipur, who gave up her throne rather than join in the bloody worship of Siva; Bānkā, the poor wood-cutter's wife, who could not be tempted by a purse of gold; . . . the penitent Magdalen of Delhi, who gave her life and the only art that she possessed, her dancing, to the service of the deity in whom she had taken refuge; and many others. Of men, there were Hari-dāsa, the sweet singer, to hear whom Akbar [the Mogul Emperor] disguised himself as a menial servant and travelled far; Nanda-dāsa, the hymn-writer, whose last words were a prayer that his soul might stand 'very close and near' the Adored; Chaturbhuja, the apostle to the savage Gonds, who taught that right initiation meant 'being born again'; Gopāla, who when smitten on one cheek turned the other to the smiter; Vilvamangala, who looked after a woman to lust after her, and, because his eye offended him, made himself blind; the unnamed king, who for the same reason cut off his right hand and cast it from him; Sura-dāsa, the blind bard of Agra; and most famous of all, perhaps the greatest poet that India has produced, Tulasi-dāsa, the teller of the deeds of Rāma." [1]

[1] G. A. Grierson, Art Bhakti-marga in E. R. E., II,5 48. (Scribners.) The examples he mentions are all taken from the Hindi Bhaktamala (the Garland of Saints).

Typical of their impassioned and joyful singing are the songs of this same "blind bard." (I have tried to keep something of the rhythm of the original—though not the rhyme):

"Like unto *Hari* there is no other master.
In whatever state his servants best find comfort,
In such state he ever keeps them.
For the hungry he has food, to the thirsty he gives water,
For the body raiment he makes ready.
He keeps alongside his servant, as the sniffing cow its calf.
Whether bound for the house or the forest.
There is none like unto him, generous, wise, and thought-taking
Ten million gods of wealth give less than he.
He honors every offering that man will make to him,
His outstretched hand receiving a grain of corn.
When trouble falls, he is straightway up and running
Bravest of warriors to defend his pledged word.
Ten million sins committed—not one will he remember;
Forgetting even Sur's mighty mass of evil."[1]

[1] From the Hindi of Sur Das (16th Century).

"Of one peculiar quality, so we saw the Lord.
His generosity is the deepest Ocean—
Creator and Chief of chieftains.
A grain of good noticed in his worshipper—
He accepts it as a favor equal to Mount Meru.
But the sea of his shame and guilt, this the Adorable
Counts but a drop in a pond.
For his devotee absent from him he goes asearching—
In compassion roaming everywhere.
Sur Das, unfortunate is the man indeed,
Who turns his back on such a Master!" [1]

Only a message of joy can capture the heart of India: the joy of knowledge (Vedanta), the joy of a mild discipline of conduct and thinking (Buddhism) or the joy of worship (Bhagavatism).

We think of India as the land of old sages. That is China, not India. China has Laocius—Lao-tze—the "old boy"—even in childhood an old man with white hair. China has Confucius—Kung-fu-tze—who as a child played solemnly at the ritual of his elders. From a Chinese book we read:

"When Confucius was five or six years old he

[1] From the Hindi of Sur Das.

used to play with his youthful companions in the neighbourhood. He set out some toy vessels in imitation of the *tsoo* and *tow,* and assumed a becoming look [literally, he put on a *tsoo* and *tow* look]. Now *tsoo* was a vessel for holding the victims and *tow* the soy or sauce; they were both used by the ancients in observing the sacrificial rites of the seasons. As the boy Confucius amused himself in this way, we can see that he had an inclination which was quite different from that of the average young folk, to study the Rules of Propriety." [1]

China has Mencius—Meng-tze—the child prodigy.

India has her ancient *rishis*—old sages that revealed the Vedas—and her aged *munis*—the hermits that dwelt in her forests—but those who made her religious history have not been these, but her young men, still susceptible to joy.

India loves the young. She marries them young because she loves them, which is a hard saying. India again and again listens to the young, who come in their enthusiastic joy.

Take Krishna, their most popular god. He is threefold: they love him as Bal Gopala—the little mischief not "studying the rules of propriety" but stealing butter from the neighbors. They

[1] Sketches of Confucius. Translated by T. L. Kan. Episode 2.

love him as the over-gay, amorous, young Krishna of the Puranas of whom one who knows Hinduism well writes:

"The hold that Krishna has upon India seems to me to be explained in this way: India is tired—tired of life and its awful responsibilities and rebirths. Krishna is the incarnation of the irresponsible; he comes under no laws, he steals, kicks a cart to pieces, runs away with women's clothes, kills a *dhobi* and takes away the clothes, entices the girls away from home and dances with them at night, and lives with 16,000 of them—he is a gay figure playing upon the flute. It gives India the sense of release, the sense of freedom from *karma;* you can kick a hole in the universe if you only follow Krishna; it is a religious drunk."

They reverence him as the youthful charioteer of surpassing grace and wisdom—the responsible Krishna who expounds the Gita. Said a scholar to me, "There is no question that if the Gita were connected with another than Krishna, its influence in India would be immeasurably greater." But would it? For youth to be serious, must it not know gayety too?

Rama shares with Krishna and Siva the devotion of Hindus. Rama is the youthful hero, who surrenders his throne, though heir, fights demons, rescues his fair Sita from the hands of the King of

Lanka (Ceylon) who had carried her off by guile and force, and returns to rule wisely in his kingdom.

Even Siva, the austere, has his gay aspects: the dancing Siva of the South.

Of the two great epics, the one—the Mahabharata—is the struggle of youths with the advice of the aged; the other—the Ramayana—is again the young and the strong.

Of Gautama, the Buddha, it is recorded:

"'In the prime of my youth, O disciples, a black-haired boy passing into manhood, against the will of my sorrowing parents, I shore off hair and beard, and putting on the yellow robe went out from home, vowed henceforward to the wandering life.' . . . He went to seek wisdom, as many a one has done, looking for the laws of God with clear eyes to see, with a pure heart to understand, and after many troubles, after many mistakes, after much suffering, he came at last to the truth. . . . At the end of these six terrible years of which we have no detailed knowledge, the great day of his Enlightenment was at hand. . . . On a clear still evening in the month of May, at the time known in India as 'cowdust,' when the air is golden and the heat of the day has begun to abate, he sat at the foot of the bo-tree and setting his teeth once more made a resolu-

tion. . . . 'Though skin, nerves, and bone should waste away, and life-blood itself be dried up, here sit I till I attain Enlightenment.' The sun had not set before victory was won, and the intuition which is the gospel of Gotama Buddha had dawned on his mind." [1]

When still young—with some forty-five years of ministry still ahead of him—he took the joy out of life, to replace it with the surer joy of Nirvana.

Mahavira, founder of Jainism, began his work at the age of thirty. India's greatest philosopher —if not the greatest philosopher Asia has yet produced—was Sankara of the ninth century. He it was who most fully and logically expounded the Vedanta. His system is still the norm of orthodoxy. Of his mother it is written:

"Before blessing Sivaguru's wife, the God asked her in a vision while she was asleep, whether she would have a number of dunces and ruffians for children, or an only wise son who was destined to be short-lived. She wisely chose the latter alternative, and had Sankara for her son." [2]

Sankara died while still in his thirties.

It would fail me to tell of the youth of Chaitanya, the greatest *bhakta* of Bengal; of the young

[1] K. J. Saunders, *Gotama Buddha*, pp. 21, 24 f.
[2] C. N. Krishnaswami Aiyar, *Life and Times of Sankara*, p. 12.

men of the Brahma Samaj—Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen; of Dayananda, founder of the Arya Samaj, who set out on his life-work at twenty-two; of Vivekananda who stirred great audiences in America and in his own land at the age of thirty. And now lo and behold the Theosophical Society presents the new and youthful Messiah—reincarnation of both Krishna and Christ—Krishnamurti! No one objects on account of his age, feeling it to be fitting that a message of joy should come from the lips of youth.

Only a message of joy can capture the heart of the world. To youth, and those still possessing the spirit of youth, is it given to bring it to the world. For youth alone has the energy, the vitality, the reservoirs undrained by life; and youth alone has the laughter, which is the witness to its truth.

One great criticism we make of these youths of India. They have put all their energy and their laughter into the other world, where it is hard to find. They have abandoned this world, as being both impossible to save, and not worth the saving. Their joy is altogether other-worldly. But for common men and women it is hard to shed this world so easily.

Here comes Jesus, "being about thirty years of

age," still in the age of enthusiasm, of energy, and laughter. He comes to the Jordan. He enters to give that ripened youth of his to the service of God, to the approaching Messianic Kingdom as John proclaimed it. Suddenly coming out of the water, he is startled by—will you permit it?—a youthful God, a God of joy and strength and laughter! It is no vision of the "Ancient of Days"—but of an enthusiastic God, with the joy of finding upon Him. Can you not hear the laughter: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am *well pleased.*" An athletic God—who split His heavens asunder and challenged that youth of Nazareth to explore them to their limits. Not his spatial heavens—but human possibilities in a universe of superhuman power joined to superhuman love. The Kingdom of Heaven was opened that day to his amazed seeing. The veil between "heaven" and earth was forever rent in twain—there was no dividing line between the Holy of Holies of "heaven" where God dwelt and the Holy Place of earth where man worshipped from afar. Henceforth "as in heaven so on earth" without distinction of space or time. Jesus was challenged to explore here and now the infinite goodness and infinite greatness of God as "Father." He became henceforth an adventurer with the thrill of the explorer upon him. Like

Columbus he had run upon a great new continent—"Thou art my beloved Son."

"Then was my soul with her new glory dazed." A new world had swum into his ken, calling for youth and courage and daring and high emprize. The God of power who loves—what does it mean for human life? He would find out.

He goes to the wilderness to compose himself, and to find in detail just how he should set himself to the great adventure. He forgets his food, he is tempted to try out, in various ways, this power of the God who loves, he finds his method, he keeps the joy—as though "angels ministered unto him."

Then he comes—back into Galilee.

I have been in art galleries of Europe and America, and not one has done justice to the "Jesus of the Gospels." They picture him a sober man, a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," a man who smiled slowly. The poet sings:

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean,
The world has grown gray with thy breath."

The novelists have drawn off his life-blood and left him an ascetic Ebionite. The short-story writers have banished the music of Pan and the dancing of nymphs at the sound of his heavy

name. And now the moving-pictures show a slow-moving and solemn Christ.

But open the earliest manuscript again: "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the good tidings of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the good tidings." (Mark 1:14 f.) It is a bugle-call, not a dirge.

How can you tell good tidings with a sober, solemn face? Men marvelled at the words of grace which fell from those lips. Whence hath this man —this young man—these words? He speaks not as the gray-bearded, solemn Scribes. Men marvelled at that illumined face. He came with no dull "Thou shalts" and "Thou shalt nots"; but instead with the sparkling "Blesseds"—joy to the poor and the pure, the humble-minded and the hungry-hearted, the meek and the mournful, the persecuted and the peacemakers. To the blind and the bound, and the bruised and the broken-hearted: joy!!

No man that day spoke of the "pale Galilean" or recalled the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Instead, some poor woman, wishing she had such a son, answered his blesseds with one of her own: "Blessed is the mother who bore you and nursed you." [1]

[1] Luke 11:27 (Goodspeed's translation).

Men marvelled at his miracles and the joy which filled them. Was there no joy in the home of Jairus or in the home of Nain? If a little child, to whom the story is told, can sense the joy and laugh with delight, could not the principal actor in the story sense it? Was there no joy in the heart, or on the face of Jesus when blind men saw and the deaf heard and the lame leaped for joy? He could not close their lips; the joy burst through—the gladness in his heart having been communicated to them for their healing.

With grace he covers palsy's bed;
To Nain he gave again;
His hand anoints a leper's head,
His feet the angry waters tread—
What fault find ye in him?

Men marvelled at his life—how joyfully he came and went. He was no John the Baptist. He kept the good things of the world. He came eating and drinking, "a glutton and a wine-bibber." Strong words! We need strong words as antidote for the pale-faced, ascetic Christ. As one puts it: "And yet the facts are patent that what scandalized the religious people of His day was that He, claiming to be a Prophet and a Messenger from God, had openly broken with the long

line of prophetic tradition, and had so little of asceticism in his mode of life; and that Christ, well knowing how that was stumbling many, held to it persistently as an essential part of the new spirit He was seeking to introduce into the world." [1]

And here is a strange paradox in Jesus that gives men of India its difficulties. Jesus the Renouncer, they understand. Jesus the Enjoyer of the things of here and now they do not comprehend nor appreciate. They understand and love the wandering teacher—without home or marriage-ties or food or "where to lay his head." But how being Sannyasa (Renouncer) could he at the same time retain the world he denies? Homeless and gluttonous go not well together.

The problem is not only theirs but ours as well, for while they have trouble with the Enjoyment, we have trouble with the Renunciation. We can appreciate his enjoyment of the wholesomeness of life, but see no merit in ascetic denial. To us the injunction to absolute poverty is an "Ebionite heresy."

The answer to the problem lies in Jesus' conception of the material world. Other men have either denied or surrendered; Jesus did neither.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, p. 68.

Instead he emerged with a thoroughgoing solution, which he proceeded to apply with enthusiasm.

At the heart of his attitude toward the material world is his trust in God as Father. If God is Father, then its implications for the world of the senses are threefold. Jesus was thorough and consistent in working out the meanings of the Fatherhood of God.

First, we are to be Children of God and not slaves of the senses. We are to seek first God's Kingdom and its uprightness, and as for the other things—leave them to God's Providence.

> "Make thou His service thy delight,
> Thy wants shall be His care."

There is here very decidedly an asceticism on which Jesus again and again insists. But the asceticism is merely preparatory to freedom: the freedom of trusting the God who loves. We can trust the Father's Providence; we are not to be "anxious" for today or tomorrow. In this attitude materialism wilts and dies, for materialism is concern for the things of sense.

Of this preliminary asceticism a recent writer says: "The asceticism of Jesus' teaching applies only to the period of preparation; the preparation past, and rebirth achieved, the asceticism also is

past, and the care-free life begins. For the newborn son the essentials of life are provided by God; he becomes one with the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. He sups joyfully with taxgatherers and sinners, he gladly receives the harlot's perfume and loves the gift for 'a thing of beauty'; he is to the eye of ascetic rigor 'a gluttonous man and a winebibber.' He lives, to outward seeming, at all adventure; he absolutely rejects all rules and ordinances; he fasts or feasts at his own sweet will, which is the sweet will of God. The member of the Kingdom is *an absolutely free man,* because he is absolutely obedient to God's will; and it is possible for him to be thus absolutely obedient because, by the preliminary abandonment, he has made himself perfectly responsive to the voice of God." [1]

The second implication goes further: material things belong to his Father's world, therefore he would use them for his Father's purposes. In this he passes from freedom to authority. He accepts the normal workings of the world: day and night, sunshine and storm, the seasons, youth and old age, food and houses and dress,[2] and on their

[1] J. Middleton Murry, *Jesus, Man of Genius*, p. 221 f. (Harper & Brothers. 1926)

[2] Jesus wore the ordinary dress of his people, in five pieces--outer garment, under garment, girdle, head-dress, and shoes. Four soldiers, a quaternion, crucified him, and to each fell a garment; for the fifth, the seamless under garment, they gambled.

framework builds his mission. It is only the abnormal he would change and bring back to the normal: sin and disease and the death of the young. These to him are not his Father's will, and so he comes calling sinners to repentance, healing diseases, casting out "demons," and bringing the little daughter of Jairus and the young men of Nain and Bethany back to life.

The third implication goes farthest of all. He filled material things with spiritual significance, living, as he did, in his Father's world. He unites these two contradictory worlds of our environment. By the shuttle of trust in God they are woven together into one seamless whole. The two antitheses are welded together in a new synthesis. The material world becomes the warp, and the spiritual the woof of a new fabric. He takes common bread and "lifting his eyes to heaven," bread and Heaven are brought together for the feeding of many; the clay formed of spittle and dust on his fingers puts a new song of joy into a blind man's soul; a wash-basin and a towel are made into a sacrament of "service unto the uttermost"; wine and bread become symbols of redemptive suffering; a wooden cross becomes a spiritual throne:

From iron nails he framed a prayer:
"Forgive that they may live!";
His cross became a golden stair,
The joy of God has found us there—
What fault find ye in Him?

Joyful then he came and went in his Father's world—whether abased or abounding, whether weary by the well or climbing energetically the high slopes of Hermon, whether companying with the beloved twelve or bent on some lonely mission, whether listening to the loud but shallow plaudits of the multitude or the caustic, carping criticism of the leaders of his people. He was exploring the goodness of God, and the goodness of God, like the waters of the Sea of Gennesaret, held him up.

And so Jesus kept the work of the world, for God is the God of work. He is the God of energy—his eternal youth unabated. "My Father worketh . . . He maketh his sun to rise . . . He causeth it to rain . . . He watches even sparrows . . . He numbers the hairs of the head . . . He feeds the birds . . . He clothes the grass of the field." Jesus calls no man to idleness in this world of radiant energy.

He kept the laughter of the world, for God is the God of laughter. "There is joy in the pres-

ence of God . . . Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord . . . We just had to make merry and be glad for this your brother was dead but is alive again, was lost and is found."

The world's greatest tragedy is the loss of the laughter of children. Maturity somehow implies soberness, and old age solemnity. Jesus restores the laughter—by making us children again. "Our Father"—and laughter returns. The universe has become a home, and the home is the seat of joy. "Except ye become as little children" —who trust and expect and laugh—"ye cannot see the Kingdom of God."

He kept the romance of the world, for God is the great lover. Love has returned, in Jesus, purified and ennobled, to its central and permanent place.

Jesus kept the adventure of the world, for God is the greatest adventurer of all. He takes tragic risks in His creation. Lord of the harvest, He suffers shortage of laborers, tares are sown by hostile hands, and much of the seed is lost. He divides His property among sons to have much of it wasted; He distributes His estate among servants to discover some are slothful and wicked and unprofitable. The Kingdom of God is God adventuring with human life.

And so Jesus called youth to join him in his

supreme adventure. "Follow me!" Only the young were able to understand—men who could dare, take a risk, gamble their lives to lose all or gain all. "Lo we have left all and followed thee"—they had left nets and homes and ploughs and professions and safety and ease to go in with him and after him as he tested out the meanings of a giving God. "If ye then being evil know how to give . . . how much more shall your Father who is in heaven. . . . Ask and ye shall receive. . . . According to your expectation it shall be done unto you."

And then the darkness closed in all too soon. The testing of it all was upon him, before he was fairly under way. Could it all stand—ānanda and its elements: energy, laughter, love, adventure, these elements of the spirit of youth? He had but begun the building of his house—but laid the foundation. Was it rock or sand? He had built on "hearing the word and doing it"—the word which that day came out of the heavens rent asunder and challenged him. This was the word, coming out of the mouth of God, on which he had lived his life. His life was a city built on the hill of utter trust and joy. It had not been hid, and important men had taken offense. He was too much for "the wise and the prudent"—the mature mind of his day. He was too much of an

adventurer to suit their liking. And so the storm burst—of concentrated human hate and jealousy and fear. The rains descended from above, the floods rose from below, and the winds blew from every side and smote upon that house!

He wanted to go on—he had just begun. He knew the crowds would howl him down; he knew his disciples with all their training, were broken reeds. There was no "rock" among them in whose loyalty he might hide. They slept while he wept. They had no stamina. They had shared all he had, and gained nothing but offense and disloyalty. Empty-handed he was returning. He was the unprofitable servant, having done all the things which were commanded him. He had wept over his own failure in the very moment of what he knew was mock triumph. The disciples and the pilgrim multitude had unwittingly enacted their jest while Pilate wrote his. And it was the same: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." He was the barren fig-tree: Three years without fruit and now to be cut down. "Lord," he cried, "let it alone this year also"—"Father if it be possible!"

He gathered himself; he could still trust that love and power:

> In the darkness of desertion,
> In the frailties of friends;

When the olives shade the moonlight
And a darker night impends:
I can trust thee,
Will of God!

In the lanterns' mocking flicker,
In the falsehood of a kiss;
When the cup of wrath grows heavy,
And I fear to ask amiss:
I can trust thee,
Will of God!

In the broken hopes of morning,
In the hour when all seems loss;
When I sense life's deepest meanings
From the shadow of a cross:
I can trust thee,
Will of God!

And so they led him away:

I

Along that very road He walks in pain,
Where few days since He rode in royal state:
Upon His bleeding back a rough-felled oak.
He stumbles, finds His feet, then falls again,
Striking His pale forehead on the cobblestones.

The crowd jeers at His awkwardness,
The Roman soldiers prod Him with their spears.
Prone He lies—
Till twittering sparrows of Jerusalem,
Picking their crumbs and seeds between the cracks,
Give Him the word to rise:
"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
Yet not one of them falleth to the ground—
Without your Father."
Refreshed, He struggles to His feet again,
And goes His way.

II

Upon that tilted cross He fights with pain;
Naked—a gruesome jest—while Roman soldiers sit
And coarsely gamble for His blood-stained clothes;
And pompous Sadducees with golden chains
Shake their combed beards over embroidered robes,
And taunt Him for His total pauperhood:
"King of the Jews!"
Yet in the place in which He suffers is a garden,
Across whose wall He glimpses spring-time flowers,

With sun-spilled hues:
"Behold Solomon in all his glory,
Was not arrayed as one of these.
If God so clothe the grass of the field,
Which today is, and tomorrow
Is cast into the fire—
Will He not much more clothe you?"
The cup of shame He drinks with new-found zest,
Down to its sweet dregs.

III

It is the ninth hour in that watch of pain;
The darkening skies enfold a darkening mind.
No word of God has come as sacramental bread
To feed the hunger of His loneliness.
At last His drying tongue and parching lips give way
Before the torrent of Love's sensitive reproach.
He lifts His thorn-pierced head and looks above:
"Eloi! Eloi!"
The eagles flying through the driven clouds
And in and out the mazes of the atmosphere,
Throw Him their joy:
"Behold the birds of the air,
Neither do they sow nor reap,
Nor gather into barns.
Yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are you of not more value than the birds?"
He bows His head, and from His thirsty lips,
Hurls His triumphant shout.

That day Youth wrote its testament and sealed it with blood. The New Testament of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is Youth's Testament. It declares—everything else to the contrary—that God is good, and that the spirit of youth can live in God's world, overcoming evil and unafraid of death. Youth has entered into covenant with God that the world is to be young. Its laughter and love, its hope and courage, its health and daring, are to abide and increase forever.

The resurrection of Jesus is God's seal upon this covenant. Henceforth we may expect anything, everything. "Lo, he goeth before you," "Lo, I am with you always"—and joy breaks in flood over a needy world.

India and the world await once more a message of deep joy that is "a well of water springing up unto eternal life." Has Christianity been true to the spirit of youth in Jesus—to his joy and his energy, to his laughter and his expectancy, to his challenge and his adventure? We have done two things to our great loss, and we must

restore them if with our ānanda we would win India or the world.

We have taken the spirit of youth out of Jesus. We have surrendered him to maturity and solemnity and pageantry, the very ones that crucified him centuries ago. "Christianity," says Principal Jacks, "was originally a religion of the young which has lost some of its savour by being adapted to the minds of the old." The Scribes have rewritten the Gospels. We have gathered together all the "Thou shalts" and "thou shalt nots," and let slip the beatitudes. We have not entered into the joy of our Lord, and have kept others from entering. We have put that joy in some future heaven. We expect to "walk and shout all over God's heaven" but not over God's earth. We have never seen the new heaven and the new earth, the holy city descending unto us. By unlovely lives and by long faces we have rubbed the polish off certain fine words. Who among our young men and women want to be "saints" or "pious" or "holy" or "godly" or know "the fear of the Lord." We have never read "My joy is made full in you." And the result: we have made the name of Jesus one that few mention outside a religious edifice or service. We can speak of Abraham Lincoln or Mahatma Gandhi or Sun Yat Sen or William E. Gladstone

at the table, but it is not good form to speak of Jesus.

And, again, we have lost the "Son of Man" in the "Son of God." "Thou art my beloved Son" —yes, but the word was spoken to the Jesus that came from Nazareth of Galilee. We have placed him so far above the snow-line of human life, that his call is from the clouds above, and not from among us.

The sheer human daring of Jesus has lost its challenge. His "follow me" comes from some heavenly shore. If I could be Peter and know him as Peter knew him—I too could take his "dare" and gamble my life with his.

Yet Jesus, whatever else he is over and above, is without meaning to me, and the four Gospels are beyond my comprehension, if Jesus was not one of us, and if his way of life is not wide open to me. His daring calls for my daring. I hear his voice, "Follow Me." The exploration is the same; the risk is the same. Can I take him literally? Is he hyperbole or simile? Is he normal or abnormal? Can my youth—in its energy—answer his youth? My joy find his joy?

This is no academic question, but the struggle of my own life. In its answer life has been remade for me.

Said a Hindu to me, "Our principal duty is to

be Christlike." True. Not only in his gentleness (ahimsa), not only in his binding with the love of God (yoga), not only in his finding of God in this life from day to day and hour to hour (jiwanmukti), but in his vitality and that means joy (ānanda). Our lives, in union with and sharing his life, are to be the good news.

Jesus entrusted the whole future of his mission —not to ecclesiastical organization (that came later), nor to literary codification in canon or creed (that came much later)—but to the power there is in "witnessing." We marvel here at the astounding insight of Jesus. He based the future of his mission (as he did in his own ministry) on the psychology of the contagion there is in joy. Joy is a forest fire, a flood tide, sunlight that brings the spring. For Christianity to depend for its propagation upon anything less than joy is to be untrue to its founder.

For joy is its own argument and proof. A radiant face is Christianity's noblest and most unanswerable apologetic. Anything less than joy is shattered by controversy. Anything less than joy is lost in the sands of the world's sin and sorrow. Anything less than joy stands pale before death's approach. Anything less than joy is drawn aside by the lure of money and fame. Anything less than joy is unequal to the task of the day. Joy is life

set to music; joy is knowledge touched with God; joy is love that knows no separations in our Father's world; joy is that deepest human quality which makes the races and the nations kin.

In Palestine came the first word of joy announcing his coming: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the peoples." (Luke 2:10).

From India comes another word of its fulfilment—out of the heart of orthodox Hinduism, telling of the further coming of "Our Asiatic Christ":

"The great Father has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus as His own. Now there is no more fear in the hearts of his enemies. Now he will endure as long as the earth receives light from the sun. The stars in the heavens are laughing. The waves in the sea are dancing for joy. You must all remain zealous. One day all the peoples of earth will follow after Jesus."

And the answering shout:

"Mahatma Isa ki jai!" Victory to Mahatma Jesus![1]

[1] From the Hindi of *Mahatma Isa*, by Pundit Bhagwan Din.

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